00065985

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by

HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018

INNERMOST ASIA

A New Edition in One Volume

Demy 8vo, price 7s. 6d.

IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND

AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY IN TIBET

BY

A. H. SAVAGE LANDOR

With 250 Illustrations
And a Map

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN
21 BEDFORD STREET, W.C.

R. Lloyd

INNERMOST ASIA

TRAVEL & SPORT IN THE PAMIRS

BY

RALPH P. COBBOLD

(LATE 60TH RIFLES)

65985

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Rx 6-6-2

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1900

3 5
65985

00065985

This Edition enjoys Copyright in all countries signatory to the Berne Treaty, and is not to be imported into the United States of America.

All rights, including translation, reserved.

TO

MY MOTHER

I DEDICATE

THIS

RECORD OF MY TRAVELS

PREFACE

MY original object in visiting the Pamir region of Central Asia was that of the sportsman, and I had no idea of either troubling myself with inquiries into the social and political conditions of the people, or of recording my travels in a book. The opportunities for observation afforded by my close intercourse with the people, the acquaintances I made among the Russian and Chinese officials, and my enforced detention at Kala-i-Wamar and Fort Charog, served to place me in an altogether exceptional position in regard to the *status quo* political and strategic at present existing in Innermost Asia, and as in the course of my journeys I visited a considerable stretch of country which has never before been seen by an Englishman, and am, I believe, with the exception of Mr. Ney Elias, whose experiences have never been made public, the only European, other than Russian, who has traversed the banks of the Oxus in the regions of Roshan and Shighnan, I feel that it is my duty to publish the results of my experiences for the information of those who may desire to follow in my footsteps, or who are interested in the political questions connected with the most interesting corner of the world.

In the hopes of making the book as readable as possible, I have recorded my travels and sporting experiences, dwelling on the various questions of geographical, political, and military importance as they occur. Towards the close of the volume I have included chapters on the Russians on the Pamirs and the

future of Innermost Asia, which will be found to contain all that is known in connection with the subject, and, as my observations, besides being the most recent, are, I believe, the most exhaustive which have yet been made, I think I may claim that my book includes the most reliable, as well as the most up-to-date, account of this little known region.

I do not claim to have here recorded every piece of information which came into my possession during my wanderings, for the reason that certain facts seem to me of too great political importance to be openly circulated. The present volume will, however, be found to contain sufficient information to enable the reader to draw his own conclusions as to the probable trend of events in the Pamirs, in Chinese Turkestan, and the outlying native states of Badakshan, Wakhan, Sarikol, Kunjut, and Raskam, and will serve as the basis on which to estimate at their actual worth the intentions of Russia in regard to the frontiers which she has pledged herself to respect.

For the information of the reader who may hold views as to Russian policy, I may explain that I entered Russian territory without any prejudices, and that while I had not previously had sufficient opportunities for gauging the good points in Muscovite methods to justify my posing as a Russophil, I most certainly had not been tempted to follow the creed of the Russophobe. In the course of my travels, I made many firm friends among the Russian officers I chanced to meet, and I still correspond with several of these, whom I regard as thoroughly good fellows and particularly charming acquaintances, but my appreciation of the kindly hospitality and genial characteristics of the men did not prejudice me in regard to the system they follow in their official relations, and I have described the Government method in force as I saw it without fear or favour.

In the hope of making this book the standard work of reference on its subject, I have included an appendix in which will be found the treaties relating to the existing frontiers, a chronology of landmarks in the history of Innermost Asia, and a bibliography of works which have been published in connection with the subject. I have taken considerable pains in the preparation of these, as well as in the revision of the book for press, but it would be too much to hope that the result is entirely free from error. Any corrections which may occur to my readers as being desirable will be thankfully received, with a view to their being made in future editions.

I am indebted to Mr. Leslie Renton for several of the photographs representing scenes on the Pamirs. Mr. Renton, accompanied by Mrs. Renton, recently concluded a most adventurous journey by traversing the Pamirs from Osh to the British frontier.

RALPH PATTESON COBBOLD.

September 1899.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THROUGH GILGIT TO THE KILIK PASS

My start from Srinagar—Baggage, caravan and retainers—Stores—My companion—The Gilgit road—Over the Tragbal Pass—Gurais—The Burzil—Astor—A sportsman's paradise—Magnificent scenery—Gilgit—The Agency—Hunza Nagar—A glimpse of Rakapushi—Nilt Fort—Baltit—Our reception by the Mir—Trouble with the caravan—Ata-Abad—Gulmit—First sight of *Ovis Poli*, the summit of the Kilik Pass. Pp. 1–28

CHAPTER II

OVER THE PAMIRS TO KASHGAR

The view from the Kilik—The Pamirs—Inhabitants—The Kirghiz—Akois—The Taghdumbash—To whom belonging—Pamir sheep—Medical practice—Paying for my fee—I try for *Ovis Poli*—A stalk—My first bag—Tashkurgan—The Chinese garrison—Racing in Sarikol—Winning a certainty—Round Murtagh Ata—Arrival at Kashgar Pp. 29–52

CHAPTER III

KASHGAR

The Agency—Chinese, British, and Russian representatives—The town of Kashgar—Its surroundings—Climate—Irrigation system—The Hazrat Afek—Trade—The Taotai—Civilities—The Chinese barracks—High repute of Englishmen—M. Petrovsky—His view on British policy—His opinion of the Chinese—The Cossack Guard—Ancient MS.—The Takla Makhan desert—Christmas day in Kashgar—*Mariage de convenance*—A Chinese banquet—Off to the Steppes . Pp 53–82

CHAPTER IV

KASHGAR TO VIERNY

Departure from Kashgar—Trouble at the Chinese Customs—A Chinese legend—Chakmak—Kizil Kurgan—Over the Turgat Pass—Akbashi—The Russian frontier—M. Sozontoff—His work and pay—Russian methods in Central Asia—Kirghiz Obligations—Smuggling on the frontier—Naryn—On-Archa—Kutumaldi—Jilarik—Osunagach—Vierny . . . . . Pp. 83–105

CHAPTER V

VIERNY TO BALKASH

At Vierny—M. Gourdet—General Ivanoff—Semiritche—Cheap fruit—Prospects of sport—My expedition—Chilik—My bag—Tiger prospects—Ilinsk—Cossack hunters—Strengthening vodka—Victimising the Kirghiz—Trouble with the natives—Tiger tracks—Extreme cold—Lake Balkash—My first tiger . . . . . Pp. 107–136

CHAPTER VI

BALKASH TO TASHKURGAN

A Stag Hunt—Caravan Breaks Down—Pishpek—Tokmak—Jilarik—The Baum Defile—Kutumaldi—Lake Issyk Kul—Sart *versus* Cossack—Return to Kashgar—Permit to visit Russian Pamirs—A Chinese Funeral—Petrovsky's Suspicions—A Truculent Beg—On the Pamirs—Lake Kara Kol—The Tajiks of the Oxus Valley—Tashkurgan—My Reception by the Aksakal . . . . . Pp. 137–164

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH THE BARTANG TO KALA-I-WAMAR

How the natives cross the river—Roshor—A dangerous path—The fable of Hazrat Ali—A narrow escape—The Tajiks—Sur Panj—Barghoo—Yaims—Arrival at Kala-i-Wamar—My reception . . Pp. 165–184

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER ON PAROLE

Usbeg hospitality—My arrival reported at Charog—" Batchas "—I desire to proceed—Delays—A prisoner—I write to Charog—Send Tilai Bai back to Gilgit—My enforced detention—I am watched—Arrival of Kevekiss—I return with him to Charog—The Russian headquarter fort—My treatment—Political discussions—Visit to Bar Panj—A Russian critic on British policy—Excursions—Marched to the frontier Pp. 185–206

CHAPTER IX

A MARCH FOR FREEDOM

Altered conduct of Kirghiz towards me—The cause—My Cossacks—I learn the cause of my arrest—The revolt in Ferghana—Across the Pamirs—The Chinese frontier—Free once more—Impending trouble with the Chinese—Rescued by Sher Mahomed—Tashkurgan—Set out for Hunza—The Source of the Oxus—The Mintaka Pass—British soil again . . . . . Pp. 207–222

CHAPTER X

BACK TO KASHMIR

Kunjut once more—Misgah—Khorabad—I meet Father Hendriks—Delayed at Hunza—Absurdity of enforced detention on frontier—Methods of politicals—Journey resumed—Chalt—Gilgit—Chilas—Back at Wular Lake—My last camp . . . . . Pp. 223–236

CHAPTER XI

KASHMIR AND IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

Reminiscences—Results of experience—Association of people and places —The age of travel—Removal of prejudice incidental to new scenes—Travel a habit with some—Regular life with others—English Society a shock to the traveller fresh from the far-off—The relation between one's self and one's surroundings . . . . . Pp. 237–248

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSSIANS ON THE PAMIRS

Non-political nature of my journey—Prejudice of travellers—Points which struck me—British representatives in Innermost Asia—M. Petrovsky—Mr. Macartney—Chinese misrule—The Pamir boundaries—Treaties—Geographical and political divisions—Russian Posts—The Tajiks—Native dislike of Russians—Schemes for invading British territory—Lack of justice in Russian rule—Trustworthy authorities—Russia's aim—Excellence of Russian information . . . . Pp. 249–282

CHAPTER XIII

THE FUTURE OF INNERMOST ASIA

Present condition of Kashgaria—Governmental methods—Corruptness of the Bais—Forcible loans—Chinese justice—Future of the country—Position of the British Agent—British frontier rule—Trade routes to Kashgar—Scarcity of Indian goods—Tea—Cost of Transit—Perils of the Karakorum route—Great Britain the greatest Mohammedan country—British policy in Innermost Asia—Certainty of Russian advance—Financial position of Russia—Her ultimate fate

Pp. 283–315

APPENDICES

A. Chronological Landmarks . . . . . Page 319

B. Commerce of Innermost Asia . . . . . „ 321

C. Mineral Wealth of Innermost Asia . . . „ 328

D. Treaties respecting the Anglo-Russian Frontier „ 338

E. Bibliography . . . . . „ 346

Index . . . . . „ 347

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

The Author in His Travelling Dress	*Frontispiece*	
On the road from India to the Valley of Kashmir	*To face page*	4
Kashmir	,,	6
House-boat on the Wular Lake, Kashmir	,,	8
Nagar from Hunza	,,	20
The first view of Badakshan	,,	32
Ovis Poli shooting—altitude about 16,000 *feet*	,,	48
A Camp on the Pamirs	,,	50
The City of Kashgar	,,	56
Kashgar Bazaar	,,	58
Hazrat Afek, the tomb of the Royal Family of Kashgar	,,	60
Bazaar in Kashgar	,,	68
Trade in Kashgar	,,	72
Lake in Thian Shan Mountains	,,	88
Kirghiz tents on the Pamirs	,,	90
Akbashi	,,	96
General Ivanoff	,,	112
The abode of the Thian Shan Wapiti	,,	120
"It was only possible to ford the glacier streams early in the morning"	,,	126
Issik Kul	,,	142
"We unloaded the Ponies"	,,	156
"The ascent was very steep"	,,	168
"By kicking out vigorously with their feet"	,,	172
On the way to Charog leaving Kala-i-wamar	,,	200
The Russian Garrison at Charog	,,	202
"Some twenty Chinese Sepoys riding towards me"	,,	216
Bozai Gumbaz in Wakhan	,,	218
The source of the Oxus	,,	220
The Tragbal Pass, Kashmir	,,	236

TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

View of Pamir from Hindu Kush 3
Captain McMahon, Captain Roberts, and Captain Deasy . . . 8
Native Falconers in Hunza Nagar 13
Rakapushi 16
Captain McMahon holds a Durbar 17
Hunza-Nagar. The Castle of Baltit 18
A group of Kunjutis 20
Gircha 23
By fording the river twelve times during the march 25
Nurlai Bai, the most remote postman, and Kallick 31
Kirghiz "house moving" in the Pamirs 34
Dead Ovis Poli 35
Building a Kirghiz tent 36
The ascent of the Kilik Pass 43
A fantastic appearance 45
Our quarry 47
Mustagh Ata—the father of snow mountains 51
Group of Indian traders in Kashgar 55
The great wall of the old city of Kashgar 57
Gate of the Hazrat Afek tomb 59
My reception by the Taotai 61
Chinese Commander-in-chief and staff 63
Bazaar in Kashgar 65
Street scene in Kashgar 71
Kashgarian women 73
A Chinese official visit in Kashgar 75
The Kashgar stag 77
A Kashgarian baker's shop 78
The Taotai's dinner party 80
Kazaks of the Thian Shan—Summer 85
First camp leaving Kashgar for Vierny 86
We meet three Cossacks 87
Camp near the Turgat Pass 91
Kirghiz tent prepared for the Russian officer 97
The sledges were exchanged for carts 101
The Governor's palace, Vierny 109

PAGE

Summer encampment of the Semiritche Cossacks 113
Kazak of the steppe 115
Cossack escort who accompanied me to Lake Balkash 121
Crossing the Ili River 123
On the shoals of Lake Balkash 131
The Tartar merchant's house 133
I quitted Vierny for Kashgar 139
Monument to Preyeralz at Issyk Kul 142
Kashgarian children 145
Mr. and Mrs. Hochberg, Swedish missionaries in Kashgar . . . 147
The passage of the Gez defile 149
Ovis Poli, photographed alive 155
"*A very rough staircase had been made*" 159
Shur Chor, the Mimbashi of Roshan 161
My caravan recrossing a glacier 163
A nasty corner—my servant on a precipice 167
The house of the Mimbashi at Roshor 169
"*Up the mountain side*" 170
The ponies had to be swung round the projecting rocks . . . 173
Rafts made of inflated goat-skins 174
Bridge over the Bartang 175
"*The only means of progression*" 177
The Bartang River 179
Meeting of Yaims with the emissary of the Bokharan Beg . . . 181
Kala-i-Wamar, where I was arrested 187
Captain Kevekiss, the Russian officer who had me arrested . . 194
A piece of the road below Roshan 204
Camp on Great Karakul Lake 209
My escort bade me farewell 210
The summit of the Kara Art Pass 211
"*We came upon a Kirghiz encampment*" 213
"*Kallick and the ponies rejoined me*" 216
Some fair sport 218
The Summit of the Mintaka Pass. Boundary stone of British and Chinese territory 220
A birch twig hanging bridge in Roshan 222
The nearest British outpost to the Russian frontier 225
High up the mountain side 227

PAGE

Mahomed Nazim Khan and Father Hendriks 229
Irises—Kashmir 239
My last camp in Kashmir 248
A Nomad's encampment on the Pamirs 251
Chinese car, Kashgar 254
Russian Kirghiz Frontier Guard 259
The head of the Kirghiz on the Russian Pamirs 270
Kizil Rabat 282
Kashgar street scene 285
Mr. Macartney, the British Agent in Kashgar 288
Kashgarian punishment 295
A Kashgarian Fakir 316

MAPS

The Pamirs . . . . . *End of Volume*
Kashmir, Kunjut, and the frontiers of Innermost Asia . *To face page* 3
Innermost Asia. The Russian Pamirs, Kashgaria, and the Khanates of the Upper Oxus . . . . . ,, 32
Semiriche . . . . . ,, 86
Lake Balkash and surrounding country . . . . ,, 110

CHAPTER I

THROUGH GILGIT TO THE KILIK PASS

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

C. KINGSLEY.

VIEW OF PAMIR FROM HINDU KUSH

CHAPTER I

THROUGH GILGIT TO THE KILIK PASS

My start from Srinagar — Baggage, caravan and retainers — Stores—My companion—The Gilgit road—Over the Tragbal Pass—Gurais—The Burzil—Astor—A sportsman's paradise—Magnificent scenery—Gilgit—The Agency—Hunza Nagar—A glimpse of Rakapushi—Nilt Fort—Baltit—Our reception by the Mir—Trouble with the caravan—Atá-Abad—Gulmit—First sight of *Ovis Poli*, the summit of the Kilik Pass.

IN August 1897 I received as a special favour permission from the Indian Government to travel through Gilgit and Hunza Nagar, or Kunjut, as it is locally termed, by the famous military road which is so jealously closed to travellers beyond Gurais. I had spent the summer in Kashmir, after a successful tiger shoot in Central India, and had applied for the necessary permit to cross the Indus by this route, so as to carry out my long-planned visit to the Pamirs, where I proposed to make a sporting tour, and, if time permitted, to cross the Thian Shan

range, and complete some observations in a country hitherto but little known to the wandering Briton.

I had been warned by my acquaintances not to be too sanguine as to the result of my application. The authorities are not, as a rule, generous with their permits, and I heard it hinted that even when exceptions had been made, the appearance of visitors, military and civil, in the neighbourhood of Gilgit was resented by the British officers in charge of the Agency, who prefer to keep the district with its fine shooting to themselves. This is the more to be regretted, owing to the fact that Kashmir proper is practically shot out, and it would be only fair to afford the military and civil officials who spend the dreary months of the hot weather in the scorching heat of the plains, an opportunity of regaining their health and obtaining some good shooting in the Himalayas. The receipt of the coveted permission, however, ended my doubts, and I lost no time in setting about preparing my equipment, so as to delay my start as little as possible.

The impedimenta necessary for the journey to the Pamirs is considerable, owing to the fact that, besides the food and equipment necessary for the use of oneself and one's retinue, it is necessary to carry forage for the train of mules or ponies. There is no corn available for travellers outside the Kashmir Valley until Gilgit is reached, and the journey of some two hundred miles passes through a country so wild and sparsely populated as to be deficient in the most ordinary requisites of existence.

I accordingly set about exploiting the resources of Srinagar, and found not the slightest difficulty in obtaining in the "City of the Sun," everything I required. And here I may draw attention to a very frequent mistake made by travellers. In the majority of instances the future explorer lays in his stores long before he reaches the fringe of civilisation. The result of this course is that he has to carry his baggage many unnecessary marches, and that he takes a good deal out of his animals, and wastes a great deal of forage, which might have been obviated. Any one bound for Yarkand or Kashgar can safely leave his equipment until he reaches Srinagar, where he

ON THE ROAD FROM INDIA TO THE VALLEY OF KASHMIR

will find, 'neath the shadow of the Takh-i-Sulieman, ample stores from which to choose his requirements.

While occupied in seeking out some likely followers, I was so fortunate as to hear that Captain Deasy, late of the 16th Lancers, was about to pay a visit to the Pamirs for the purpose of making surveys, taking altitudes, and doing similar work on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, and I gladly arranged to join him on the road.

After many interviews, involving considerable waste of time, I engaged a Ladakhi called Kallick, a man of about forty, who possessed a good record as cook and headman, and I never had any cause to regret the compact. Kallick had already visited the Pamirs on more than one occasion, having served with Captain Younghusband, Mr. Greenfield and other travellers. As caravan man I took on a Yarkandi named Tilai-Bai. He undertook to look after the ponies and to act as my syce and servant. He was one of the most extraordinary-looking men I have met with, but served me well. In addition to these two, I made a contract with an Astori named Shoama, who agreed to supply fifteen strong ponies with five men to look after them as far as Yarkand. Of these animals I calculated that twelve would be sufficient to carry the stores and fodder, while the remaining three would allow one for my own riding, one for Kallick, and one spare animal for contingencies. Tilai-Bai and his men agreed to walk. The only other member of the expedition was a mongrel fox-terrier named Spot, my constant companion, whom I left in Kashmir on my return there the following year.

By way of stores I purchased a plentiful supply of flour, cocoa, oatmeal, tinned butter, condensed milk, sugar, tea, coffee, and tinned vegetables, bacon, treacle, jam, potted meats, beef extract, sago, baking powder, Keating, biscuits, candles, lard, rope and string, ink, needles and thread, matches, medicines, cooking utensils of aluminium, folding stove, and many odds and ends. For presents to Chinese officials I took a few bottles of liqueurs and some boxes of preserved fruits. Besides these I purchased two small tents lined with serge from the Elgin Mills at Cawnpur. These

weighed forty pounds each, and for a cold climate there are none better. By way of luxuries I provided myself with three bottles of rum and a supply of beef-tea in skins.

My stores were packed in leather trunks known as yakdans, made in Kashmir, and well adapted for travel. These weigh, when full, about eighty pounds each, two to a pony-load, and being well made and strong, will stand any amount of knocking about. The total weight of my supplies, including cooking apparatus, rifles, ammunition, and forage for the ponies, calculated to last as far as Gilgit, was 2300 lbs.

My battery, to me the most important feature in the outfit, comprised a ·256 Mannlicher by Gibbs of Bristol, a single-barrelled ·303, and a Ubique ball-and-shot-gun by Tolley. My supply of ammunition was sufficient to meet all probable contingencies for a year.

Captain Deasy's caravan was larger than mine, including twenty-six ponies, six servants, and by a coincidence it transpired that his headman owned the same name as mine, though it turned out that in character the two Kallicks were entirely opposite.

I left Srinagar at nine o'clock in the evening of the 13th of September 1897, by boat for Bandipur, where I had arranged to meet Kallick, who had left early in the day by road. The current of the Jhelum is very rapid, and the boat drifted down without effort on the part of the crew besides that necessary to keep in the middle of the stream, and so we sped on through the night pleasantly enough until we arrived at Bandipur at seven o'clock on the morning of the 14th, having covered the thirty miles in rather less than ten hours.

I found Kallick waiting my arrival with all in order, and after inspecting the distribution of the loads and taking stock of the Astoris who were to act as drivers, we got away from Bandipur at two o'clock, and started along the Gilgit road, which may certainly claim to be one of the engineering wonders which have marked the spread of British influence along the North-West frontier.

Until 1890 the communication between Gilgit and the Kashmir Valley was, by means of the merest track, often

KASHMIR

rendered undiscoverable by snow or ice, by which supplies had to be conveyed by relays of coolies, many of whom lost their lives on the mountain side. The construction of the road was one of the first tasks undertaken by direction of Colonel Durand on his being appointed to the Gilgit Agency in 1889. The road is 10 feet wide, and has a maximum gradient of 1 in 10. The contractors were Messrs. Spedding and Co., whose energy throughout has been beyond praise. It must be borne in mind that the country between Srinagar and Gilgit is absolutely wild and produces nothing, and that consequently all the corn and stores requisite for the thousands of coolies engaged on the construction of the road had to be carried cross-country, the task calling for an organisation of no ordinary kind. Another feature in this specimen of road-making was the variety of tribes who worked side by side, and by dint of excellent supervision and careful organisation were kept on friendly terms. Among the gangs of coolies thus employed were Afridis, Kashmiris, Kabulis, Kyberis, Ladakhis, Peshawaris, Punjabis, and Swatis, and from first to last no trouble arose among them.

Soon after leaving Bandipur, the Gilgit road assumes an upward gradient, and, turning north-east, climbs the Tragbal Pass. The scenery along this stretch is very fine, and the views are magnificent. The ascent up the Tragbal is fairly steep, though the road is so well graded that the going is good. Some distance beyond Bandipur I stopped and had tea with Major and Mrs. Yielding at their charming bungalow. Major Yielding was at that time in charge of the commissariat arrangements necessary for victualling the Gilgit Agency.

The summit of the Tragbal is 13,493 feet high, and we arrived at the Dâk Bungalow just below, at eight o'clock, having been on the road since noon. I was very tired, owing to being somewhat out of condition, but the ponies had stood the climb well; and after eating the excellent dinner which Kallick provided, I felt equal to a further march had that been necessary. The night was wonderful, the sky being clear and the air invigorating though cold. The Dâk Bungalow was the *rendezvous* where Captain Deasy had arranged to join me,

and I turned in looking forward to his arrival the following day. Nor was I disappointed, for he turned up at half-past seven in the evening.

We started with our united forces at 6.30 on the 17th, and on reaching the summit were greatly struck by the fine view of Haramook, which towered to an altitude of 17,000 feet on the right, while far away on the left could be seen the ridges of

CAPTAIN MCMAHON, CAPTAIN ROBERTS, AND CAPTAIN DEASY

Nanga Parbat, dividing Kashmir proper from the country of Shinâki and the Indus Valley, which is said to attain a height of 27,000 feet.

The whole of the valleys in the foreground were covered with pine forests, which added to the grandeur of the spectacle; and we regarded the scene with the greater enjoyment from the fact that we knew that we should shortly enter on an entirely different species of scenery.

The descent led us through pine-woods and alongside a mountain stream, and after following the road to a distance of fourteen miles from the Dâk Bungalow, we came to a camp

HOUSE-BOAT ON THE WULAR LAKE, KASHMIR

which is spoken of as Karagbal, where we stopped for the night.

The morning of the 18th broke amid a torrential rainstorm, but this subsided, and at 7.30 we resumed our journey along a pretty road until we came to the Kishengunga River just before coming to Gurais, which place we reached at noon. Here we lunched on the river bank, and sent for the postmaster, who is stationed in the village, and who had a telegram for me from Captain McMahon, the political agent at Gilgit, telling me that the noted Pamir Shikari Mahomed Tukta, whose services I had hoped to retain, had been engaged by some officer who was setting out on a sporting tour from Gilgit in the direction of the Pamirs. This news was extremely disappointing ; but there was nothing to be done, so we resumed our way beyond Gurais, five miles from which we reached Churwan, where we chanced on a commissariat sergeant and a telegraph official with whom we talked shikar till dark. Then Deasy gave me a lesson in astronomy, and we turned in after a most enjoyable day.

In the morning I took some photographs of the views round Churwan and we made a start, but had to halt to succour one of the ponies, which had picked up some poisonous grass and showed signs of giving in. The men thereupon lit a fire and held his nose over the smoke, which apparently cured him, for he was soon all right again. At this juncture Deasy had his first dispute with his headman (Kallick No. 2), who turned out an altogether undesirable character. This man had been engaged for my companion by the Wazir of Leh some months previously. By dint of using Deasy's name he had obtained goods of various kinds, rugs, coats and ponies, from the traders of the Leh bazaar. These articles he had brought to Srinagar and sold. The facts were disclosed by numerous telegrams which we found waiting our arrival at the different stations imploring payment from Deasy, who of course knew nothing whatever of the transactions referred to. Kallick No. 2 did his best to spoil the first part of our journey, and besides being an incorrigible thief, showed himself a ruffian, and ended by threatening to take his master's life. He met his reward,

however, when we arrived at Gilgit, where he was had up before the Wazir, who sentenced him to a term in Gilgit gaol.

At Churwan it was discovered that a number of Deasy's ponies had sore backs, due to his man's carelessness, and the great heat tended to increase the trouble. Near Churwan we met Mr. Willie Mitchell, who holds the contract for the keep-up of this section of the Gilgit Road, and he rode with us for some distance, turning back after a hearty God-speed at the entrance to the Burzil Pass, which is one of the most interesting bits of road between Kashmir and Gilgit, since it forms the actual line of demarcation between the arboreal scenery of the Himalayas and the bare grandeur of the region of the Hindu Kush. Up to the summit of the Burzil, which reaches an altitude of 13,500 feet, the valley sides are clothed with pine forests, and the ground is decked with green and carpeted with beautiful mountain flowers. Beyond the land is arid, bare and forbidding, the suggestion of scarcity being appropriately framed by the towering peaks of Kohistan and Little Tibet.

The road over the Burzil was heavy going, and when only half way we were overtaken by a severe snowstorm, which compelled us to take shelter behind some rocks and get chilled to the bone. When we eventually reached the post-house provided for affording shelter to the dâk men on the northern descent, I was quite done up, and had to turn in without even taking the food Kallick had prepared.

On the 20th of September we passed through Chillum, where we met half a regiment of Kashmîr Sepoys on their way from Gilgit to Jammu, and at four o'clock arrived at Astor, 114 miles from Kashmir, where we found the brothers McDonald in charge of the road in camp, who entertained us most kindly. Here also we encountered Surgeon-Major Perry, who had been sent to this region by the Indian Government to study goître, which he had discovered was very prevalent in the Astor valleys. The gallant surgeon, who very sensibly was combining business with pleasure, had just come in from a shooting expedition, having killed a fine ibex as well as a good specimen of a markhoor (*Capra falconeri*).

Astor is a veritable sportsman's paradise. In the immediate neighbourhood are a number of nullahs which abound with game, ibex, markhoor, and oorial. We spent two days with the McDonalds, and I shot a number of chikor, a bird resembling French partridge. Even the best of times come to an end, however, and on the 22nd we tore ourselves away from our hospitable entertainers and resumed our way along the Astor river. A few miles out we came at a sudden bend in the road on a flock of oorial (*Ovis cycloceros*), but as luck would have it, my rifle was packed and unavailable, and so I had to be content with admiring the view, which was magnificent.

The Astor at this point runs its course some 2000 feet below the road, while the Gilgit mountains come into view for the first time. No Swiss scenery approaches the grandeur of the mountain scenery in these regions, and the surroundings of Doyan, where we camped in view of the Indus, are among the most picturesque of any I have yet seen.

We left Doyan at 6.30, along a descent cut out of the solid rock, which took us down into the valley at an angle of 45°, and at the bottom found a party of Bootias cooking their dinner, and shortly after reached the Rhamghat bridge over the Astor, where a Sepoy guard of the 4th Kashmir Rifles was stationed. This place is an important point, for it is here that the road to Chilas and Abbotabad joins that from Gilgit. The heat at this part of the journey was intense, and the sun reflected off the bare rocks and sand seemed to sear our faces. Soon, however, we arrived at Bunji where, after a hot ride, we found the Dâk Bungalow, a delightful resting-place, having been recently used for the purposes of an officers' mess. The floor was spread with numdahs, and there were books about, which gave it a distinct suggestion of civilisation, while on the walls were recorded the heights of various travellers who had stopped there, among them the present Viceroy of India.

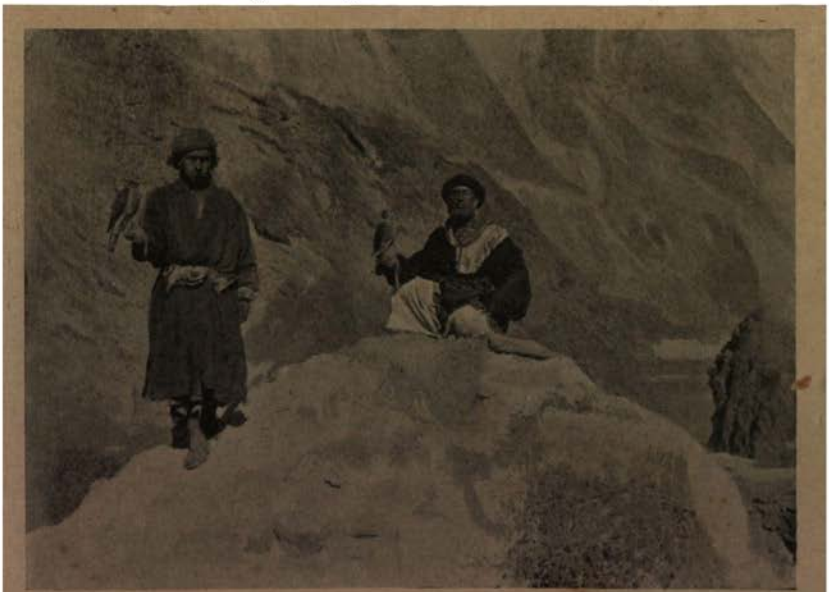
We were rewarded for an early rise the next morning by a spectacle of unparalleled grandeur. Looking northwards towards Gilgit we saw several stately peaks of over 20,000 feet towering above a multitude of naked ridges, these being the mountains of Kunjut. Behind us rose Nanga Parbat,

a mighty mass of snow. From its sides protruded great buttresses forming lower down well-defined nullahs clothed with pine, larch, juniper and other trees. These are the famous nullahs of Chilas, and abound in markhoor and ibex. Beyond Bunji lies the bridge over the mighty Indus, which is protected by a Sepoy guard. We camped that night in a horrible wayside bungalow situated in a waste of sand and barren rock. The heat had been terrible all day, and both men and ponies were exhausted. Soon after arrival I collapsed with fever, and being no better in the morning, Deasy rode on to the nearest village and got some men to carry me the remaining twenty miles into Gilgit on a charpoy, or native bed. Just outside Gilgit I was met by the hospital dholi sent by the surgeon in charge, and Mrs. McMahon very kindly sent with it some tempting refreshments. A camp was pitched for us in a charmingly shaded grove, where we spent a pleasant fortnight as the guests of the political agent, Captain McMahon, and his charming wife.

Gilgit is the furthest point of the Indian Empire where regular troops are stationed. The garrison consists of two hundred regulars, two regiments of Kashmir Imperial Service troops, and a mountain battery. It is a hundred and fifty miles from the point where three empires meet, and a hundred and sixty from the Cossack post at Kizil Rabat. The political importance of the post has diminished since Kunjut has been occupied and the people have settled down to peaceful avocations. Considering its remoteness, Gilgit may be said to be quite civilised. There are no fanatical tribes in the neighbourhood, and there is a post and telegraph office, a public works department, and various other signs of social development.

Since 1890 Gilgit has grown considerably, in consequence of the large number of followers attendant on the garrison. At the time of my arrival there were ten British officers in the station, including medical officers. The limited extent of ground under cultivation, however, provides only for the native population, and supplies have to be imported. The situation of the place, in a narrow valley surrounded by bare mountains of

great height, renders it liable to extremes of temperature, and in the summer the heat is often excessive. In winter it is cold but dry and bright, and the surrounding nullahs abound in game. Among other animals found in the vicinity are markhoor, ibex, oorial, and red bear. The former are particularly plentiful, and during the winter can frequently be seen low down on the hillsides from the officers' quarters. It is no unusual thing during the winter for the officers at the



NATIVE FALCONERS IN HUNZA NAGAR

Agency to kill as many as a score of these animals, measuring over forty-five inches, one head having been found to reach upwards of sixty inches in length.

Although so far removed from their comrades down in the plains, and cut off from the delights of polo and ladies' society, the officers at Gilgit have a very fair time and do not call for much sympathy. In the winter they have the finest stalking in the world, whilst woodcock and duck keep them in practice with the shot-gun. Then there is golf, football with the natives, and lawn tennis; so that this time of year becomes tolerable enough. In the summer it is undeniably

hot, but the surrounding mountains remain snow-crowned, and an hour's climb is sufficient to enable one to reach a cool temperature. Above all, in recompense for the comparative exile involved in a residence at Gilgit, there is the fact that the post is so near the frontier that an officer quartered there is pretty certain to be in any disturbance which may crop up. At the time of my visit the Pathan rising was in full swing along the North-West frontier, and the political agent was carefully watching the turbulent tribes down the Indus Valley among whom a defiant spirit was apparent. The Chilasis had never been thoroughly subdued, and their proximity to the Swatis made it possible that they might at any moment throw their lot in with them in their action against the Sirkar.

We stayed at Gilgit ten days, waiting for the water in the Hunza River to fall sufficiently to enable our laden ponies to ford its upper reaches. We occupied the time in overhauling our caravans, carrying out necessary repairs and laying in fresh supplies of flour and rice. At length we heard that the river had fallen sufficiently, and we bade farewell to our hospitable hosts and civilisation, and set out towards the north. Fortunately for us, Captain McMahon, who had recently been appointed political officer at Gilgit, decided to visit the States of Hunza and Nagar, both of which are under his supervision, and it was arranged that he and Roberts, the Residency surgeon, were to overtake us at Chalt the following day.

On leaving Gilgit the road crosses the Yasin River, which joins the Indus in the Bunji plain below, and then turning a sharp corner enters the gorge leading through Hunza and Nagar to the crest of the Hindu Kush. This is the direct road to the Pamirs and Central Asia, being only about one half as long as that followed by traders through Ladakh and the Karakorum range. The Hunza River did not look as if it had sunk very much as we watched it roaring and tumbling down on its way to warmer climes. The path along its bank was still covered by water, and we had to take the upper road, which, owing to its constant and steep gradients, entailed a great deal of exhaustion on the ponies. We reached Nomal,

eighteen miles from Gilgit, in the afternoon, and halted for the night in a dâk bungalow, in which a small collection of ibex and markhoor heads testified to some officer's skill. Close by we found the remains of a curious old fort which had in its time been the scene of many a hard fight between the Kashmiri and the wild Punjutis, who used to raid the country round, often as far as Gilgit itself. In one of these fights, less than fifty years ago, a whole regiment of Sepoys was cut up and taken prisoners, to be afterwards sold as slaves on the Pamirs and in Chinese Turkestan, where their descendants remained in bondage until some four years ago they were liberated by the efforts of Mr. Macartney, our political agent in Kashgar. The havildar in charge of the fort met us with a present of grapes, which was very welcome, and we noticed that he wore the Chitral medal. Nomal village is within the Gilgit jurisdiction, but beyond is semi-independent. The road traversed this day was very heavy going, and it was late when we camped and prepared the evening meal. Just as we gathered round the table in preparation for the repast we were horrified to see my dog Spot walk out of the opposite door with a leg of mutton intended for us in his jaws. We were, however, so hungry that we did very well with a scratch meal of tinned provisions. A march of twelve miles on the next day brought us to Chalt, where our arrival was welcomed by a village band of strange-looking Nagar men playing extraordinary instruments. We found a company of the 4th Kashmir Rifles stationed here under a very smart native officer, who had kept his men under arms during the greater part of the day so as to be ready to salute McMahon on his arrival. The political agent joined us later in the evening, and we started early next morning across the suspension bridge over the Hunza River, the last relic of engineering skill we were to see for many months.

Some five miles beyond Chalt we turned a corner, and upon the vision broke such a spectacle as would fill the least impressionable of mortals with wonder and awe. The great mountain Rakapushi, 26,000 feet high, towered above us, 19,000 feet rising before our eyes straight up from the valley.

We all got off our ponies and sat down and looked silently. Speech would have been a vulgar intrusion, for it was a vision solemn and beautiful beyond any of this world's sights and shows. Rakapushi is the noblest of mountains, matchless in her form and nature. Her sunny lower slopes lay green and smiling, giving place higher up to forests of mountain-ash, juniper and birch, golden and crimson in autumnal hues.

RAKAPUSHI

Above stretched the dark moraine up to the vast snow-fields and glittering glaciers. Even the great quiet shades in the mountain were radiant with reflected light more brilliant than man could depict; the sunlight moved along, revealing the delicate rippling lines which mark the concealed crevasses and the waves of drifted snow. It sparkled on the edges, it glittered on the icicles, it shone on the heights, it illumined the depths, till all was aglow and the dazzled eye returned for relief to the quiet forests. By sunlight or moonlight Rakapushi's splintered icy crest is the one object which unfailingly attracts the passing traveller; in the imagination it becomes invested with a personality. Far above this world's sin and tumult this guardian angel of the valley below stands, a solemn, stainless peak; alone, nothing between itself and the pure quiet sky. Such a sight filled us with thought for many a mile after. We took some photographs, and continued on our journey through a succession of villages surrounded by orchards full of fruit and

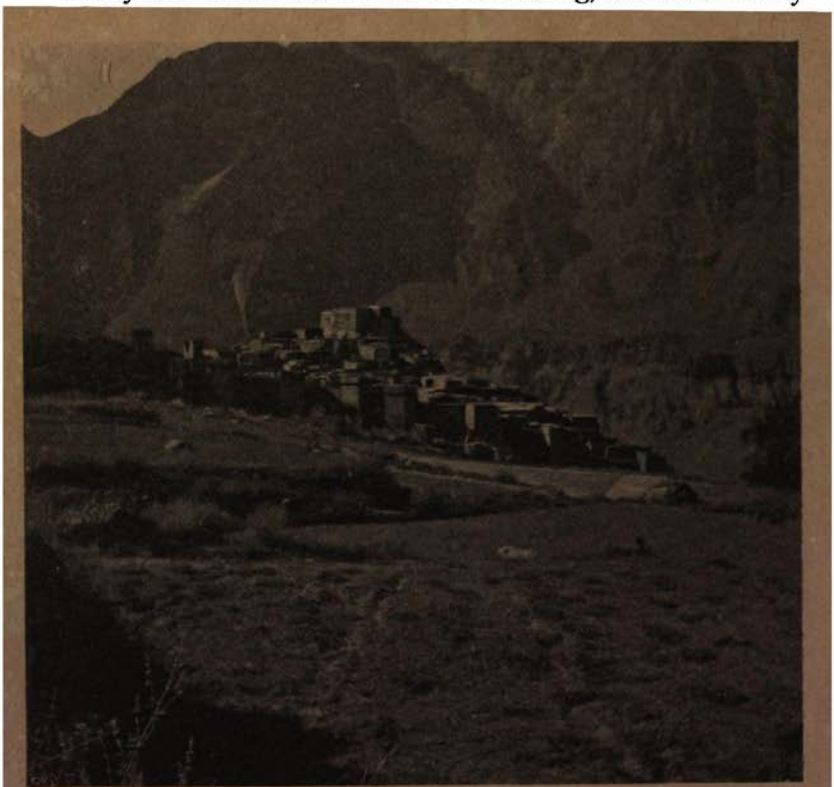
scented flowers, in one of which breakfast awaited us under the walls of Nilt Fort. We subsequently explored what remained of the old fort, the scene of such stubborn fighting in 1891, when the men of Hunza and Nagar succeeded in stopping the force despatched to their country from Gilgit. And a brief inspection of the surroundings showed the extraordinary strength of the position, and made us marvel the more how the intrepid Manners Smith with his band of Ghoorkas managed to turn the enemy's position.

CAPTAIN MCMAHON HOLDS A DURBAR

Leaving Nilt and its reminiscences behind, we rode on through more villages, and watched the people getting in their crops. Occasionally we passed mediæval-looking castles perched on the cliffs above the Hunza River, reminding one of the ruins along the Rhine. Farther on we descried in the distance a crowd of fantastically dressed hillmen awaiting us, and one, richly attired in embroidered silk, rode forward to meet McMahon, whom he saluted and assisted to dismount. This was Iskander Khan, the Rajah of Nagar, and with him were the principal chieftains attended by a guard of natives, who presented arms in a very creditable style. McMahon then proceeded to hold a durbar, and it was an interesting sight to watch the British officer surrounded by these wild tribesmen,

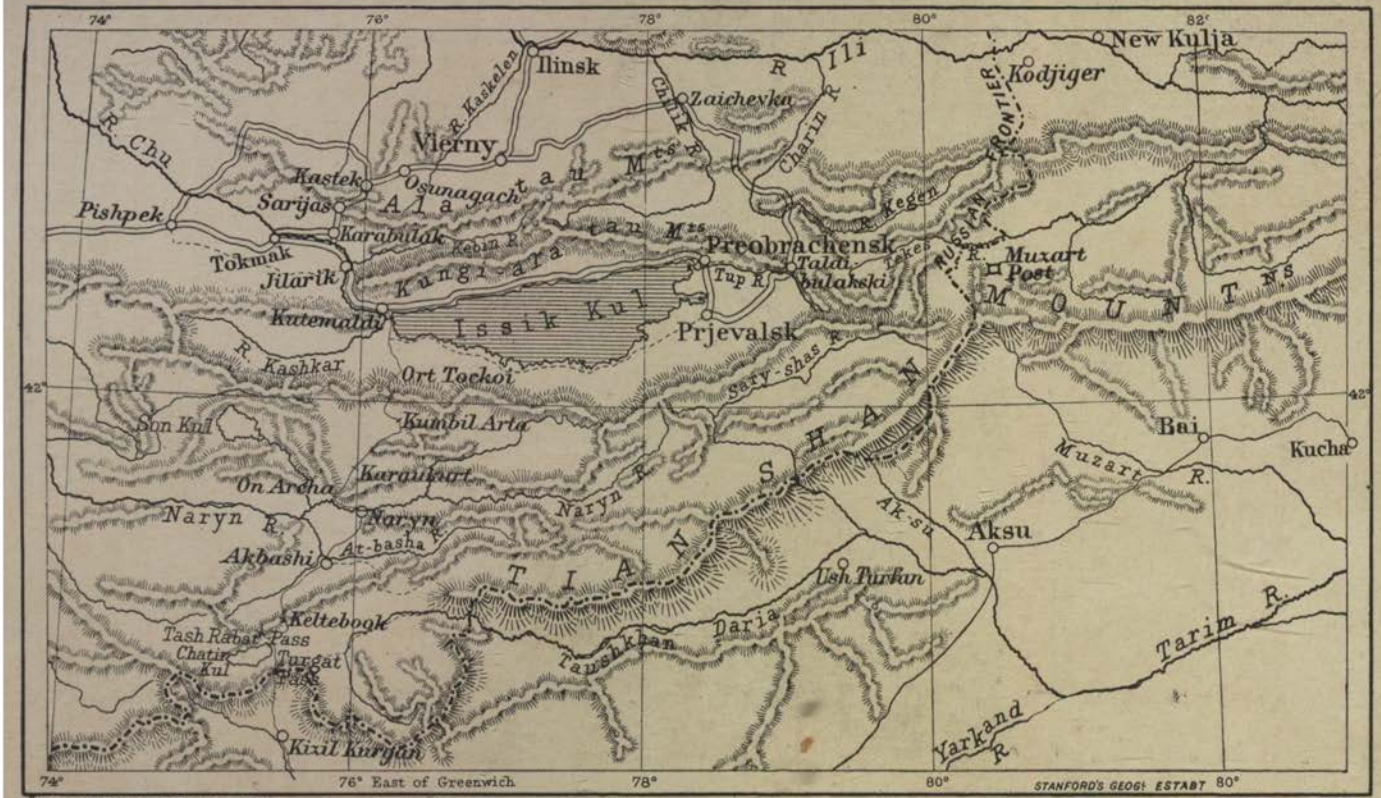
while numberless natives crowded the hills around and watched the ceremonial. I noted that a number of the retainers attendant on the Rajah carried hawks of various kinds, and learned that the chiefs in this country are greatly addicted to this sport.

Deasy and I left the durbar in full swing, and rode slowly



HUNZA-NAGAR. THE CASTLE OF BALTIT.

on until the others overtook us, and shortly afterwards we reached a point where the valley widened and disclosed in the distance the castle of Baltit, the capital of Hunza and the ancestral home of the rulers of that State. Here the Wazir of Hunza met us, mounted on a fine Badakshi stallion, and surrounded by his retinue. The Hunza men turned out in crowds to do honour to McMahon, and we had a real trium-


74°
76°
78°
80°
82°
42°
New Kulja
Kodjiger
Ilinsk
R. Ili
Zaichevka
Chilik R.
Charin R.
R. Kaskelen
Vierny
R. Chu
Kastek
Osunagach
Ala tau Mts
Sarijas
Pishpek
Karabulak
Kebin R.
Kungi-ara tau Mts
Preobrachensk
Taldi-bulakski
Tekes R.
Muzart Post
Tokmak
Jilarik
Tup R.
Issik Kul
Kutemaldi
Prjevalsk
R. Kashkar
Ort Tockoi
Sary-shas R.
Son Kul
Kumbil Arta
Bai
Kucha
Muzart R.
On Archa
Karaukurt
Naryn R.
Naryn
Ak-su
Aksu
Akbashi
At-basha R.
Ush Turfan
Keltebook
Tash Rabat Pass
Chatin Kul
Turgat Pass
Taushkhan Daria
Tarim R.
Yarkand R.
Kizil Kurgan
RUSSIAN FRONTIER
TIAN SHAN MOUNTNS
76° East of Greenwich
STANFORD'S GEOGL ESTABT
Scale of Statute Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80

SEMIRICHE

phal progress, receiving offerings of grapes, apples, and pears at every turn. As we approached the capital we traversed a considerable tract of terraced land sloping from the foot of the mountains to the river below, and carefully cultivated. Outside the castle we found the Mir's private band, which welcomed us with some discordant music, and we were received by Rajah Nazim Khan, the present Mir, surrounded by his chiefs and richly attired in green embroidered silk. The Mir is a good-looking man of about thirty, with a very pleasant expression and long black hair. He saluted McMahon respectfully and conducted us to the bungalow set apart for our accommodation, where, after a ceremonious visit, he left us.

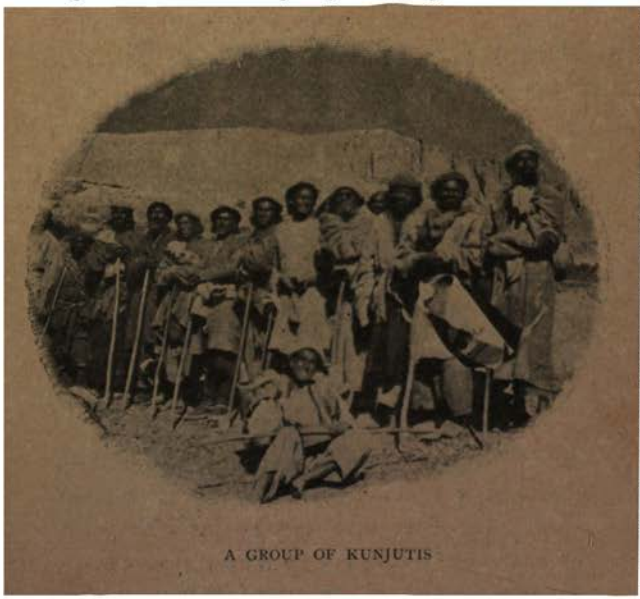
Next morning we returned the Mir's visit, escorted by a Hunza official, who led us by a pleasant road through fruit trees up the ascent to Baltit. At the gateway we were received by a number of chiefs, who conducted us along a dark passage and up a number of stairs to the reception-room of the Mir, who received us very courteously. Here tea and fruit of various kinds were served, and then, whilst the political officer discussed affairs of State, we proceeded to explore the castle and admire the magnificent view it commands.

Baltit stands on the brink of a precipice hundreds of feet deep. At the bottom runs a glacial torrent into which, in former days, inconvenient relatives and unpopular chieftains were hurled. Behind the castle rise rugged mountains to a height of 20,000 feet, while in the direction of the river, the eye ranges over a vista of green fields and orchards and trees, all green, red and golden. On the far side lies Nagar, and above a deep nullah which cuts the hill in two, overlooking a mighty glacier, is the abode of Iskander Khan.

We witnessed a game of polo during our stay here. The ground is long and narrow, the players extremely numerous, and the field rode so furiously as to make it difficult to understand why more of them do not get killed. The Hunza people are a good-looking race with well-cut features and high colour. They are lithe and active, and of childlike disposition, and their confidence in the British is boundless. As irregular troops they are invaluable in this mountainous country, and wherever

they can be led they will follow. The women are exceedingly pretty, but are for the most part kept in seclusion. Unlike their neighbours of Chitral, the Hunza Nagar people maintain a high code of morals, and such a thing as selling their womenkind is unknown.

As the time of our departure approached my Astor ponymen assumed a truculent air and declined to act up to their agreement to carry my baggage as far as Yarkand. They had never been beyond Hunza, and the upper Kunjut Valley was an object of mystery to them, and I believe they also feared the cold of the Pamirs. My experience had taught me the folly of taking unwilling servants with one, as they invariably jeopardise the success of the expedition. I therefore decided to take them only as far as the British frontier, and sent a man on in advance with a message to the Kirghiz to bring some beasts of burden from the Pamir to meet us. As far as Hunza there had been a good pony road, but this now came to an end, and in its place lay a mountain track along precipitous hillsides with occasional hanging galleries artificially constructed in places where a man's head must be steady, and a false step means precipitation down a precipice of some hundreds of feet into the tumbling river below. It is only in sections of this track that it is possible to employ ponies for carrying one's baggage. Over the greater portion one's impedimenta has to



A GROUP OF KUNJUTIS

NAGAR FROM HUNZA

be borne on the backs of hillmen while the ponies descend and swim the river from bank to bank in search of a road. We were, therefore, compelled to requisition a number of coolies, and under McMahon's influence about one hundred and thirty men appeared on the morning of our departure to serve us. We parted from McMahon with genuine regret, and felt truly grateful for the ready yet unobtrusive way in which he had smoothed so many difficulties from our path.

The Mir sent with us two trusty men to aid us so long as we remained within his territory. Both had fought against us in 1891, and the tales they told us of the contest were deeply interesting. We started at six on the morning of October 20, and having traversed the orchards of Hunza we felt that we had left the region of civilisation and of comfort behind us as we entered the steep and narrow mountain region in which we were to make our acquaintance with hardship and privation.

Our first march was a short one, only eight miles to Ata-Abad, where we pitched our tents on a tract of sand at a mountain base below the tiny village which gives its name to the region. After a while some men came down from the rocky plateau 2000 feet above, and presented us with some goats' milk, which we gladly accepted. Our carriers lit fires and clustered round them in picturesque groups, cooking their chupattis of coarse flour. Darkness and its silence came over the camp, the coolies lay huddled together, side by side, our caravan men piled our kit round them, and slumbered peacefully, wrapped in their blankets. Our first camp alone with Nature, underneath the stars. The moon rose above the serried ridge and bathed the mountain-side and the camp in soft white light, and shed a radiant path across the turbulent river. We sat far into the night, lost in the matchless beauty of the scene.

'Tis midnight. On the mountain's crown
The cold round moon shines deeply down,
Blue roll the waters—blue the sky
Looks like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light
So wildly, spiritually bright.

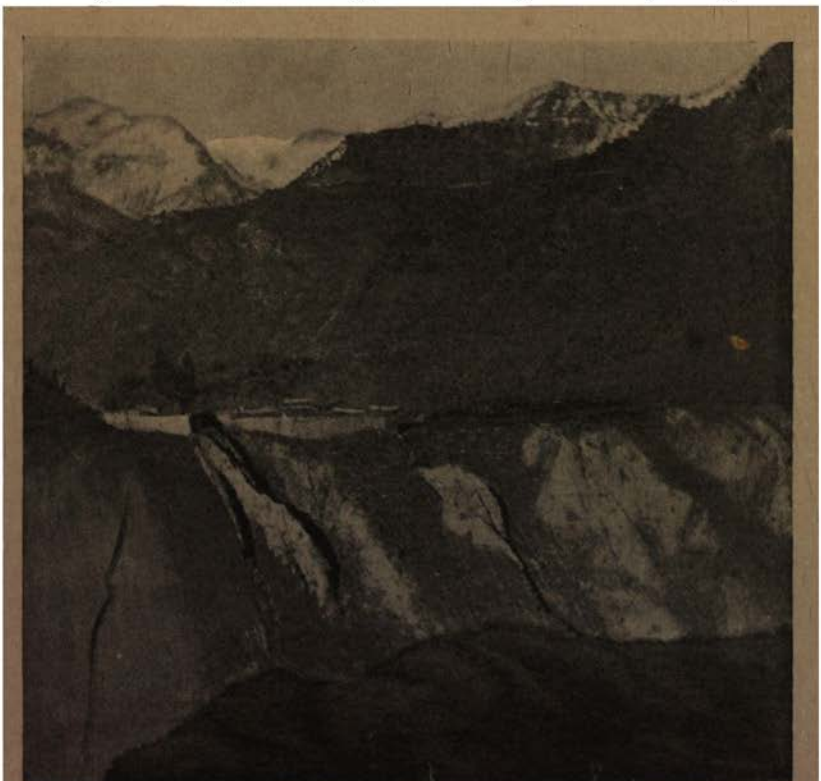
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
Nor turned to earth without repining?
Nor wished for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray.

Rejoicing to feel we had left the trammelled life of civilisation behind, we awoke refreshed as only the open air *can* refresh, and full of plans for the future, set forth once more.

On the second day after leaving Hunza we came to Gulmit, a considerable village. The Mir of Hunza has a summer residence here, which was at that time occupied by his wife, who, on hearing of our arrival, sent us a fine basket of grapes and apples. The Rajah's little son, a pretty little boy with great black eyes and long lashes, came out and made friends with us, and appeared so delighted with the chocolate we gave him, that he afterwards sent us a second basket of fruit. The Lumbadar told us that in former days he had taken part in many raids in the direction of the Pamirs as far as Shadidula. The road they followed was by the Shimshal, and on one occasion the Kunjutis captured 1000 yaks, 500 sheep, and 100 Kirghiz men and women. All this booty was handed over to the Mir of Hunza, who sold the Kirghiz to the Chinese as slaves for 120 rupees each. Captain Younghusband had, he said, given Safdar Ali 1000 rupees on condition that he stopped these raids, while the Chinese Amban at Yarkand presented him with a similar present, but these bribes had not the desired effect. Above Gulmit the elevation increases rapidly, and one meets with fewer fruit-trees. At one point one has to cross a huge moraine formed by the deposit of three glaciers, and the walls of green ice above present a fine spectacle to the traveller. Just beyond, on the left bank of the river, is the Shimshal defile, up which the path is only practicable in winter. This route was the one which used to be followed by the Kunjutis on their plundering expeditions to the Raskam Valley. The road, which at its entrance is narrow and forbidding, being overshadowed by perpendicular mountains on either side, has been well described by Captain Younghusband.

On the fourth day after leaving Hunza we crossed the Batur glacier, a huge ice river some twenty-five miles long, and

we had to pick our footsteps across its surface for about two miles, the aspect presented being that of a rough sea suddenly frozen solid. Huge pinnacles of fantastically shaped ice rear their heads on all sides, while deep crevasses scour the surface in every direction, rendering the crossing extremely dangerous



GIRCHA

to the ponies. In some places the glacier is of an inky colour, in others the ice is as clear as crystal, and the aspect of the whole is imposing to a degree. On the fifth day we passed the entrance to the nullah, leading to the Irshad Pass, over which there is a road, though a very difficult one, leading to Sarhad in Wakhan, and a little later we crossed the gorge which leads to the Kungerab Pass from which there is a road

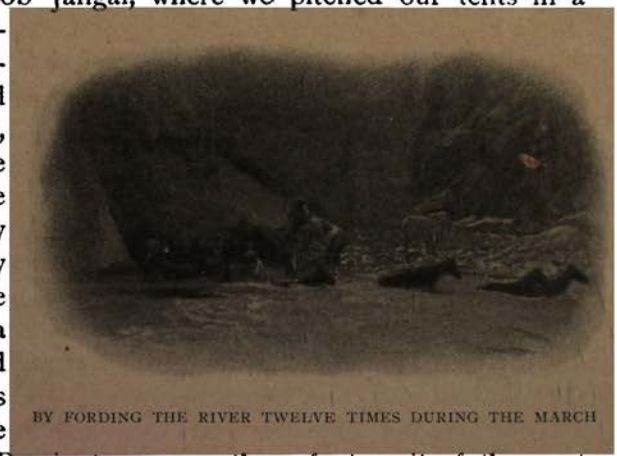
leading to the Taghdumbash Pamir. Later on I visited this pass from the Pamir side, and found it to be purely a winter route, being nearly entirely under water in summer time.

After traversing the Batur glacier we came to a small hamlet named Gircha, where I noticed a curious temple which Pero Loman, the guard appointed by the Mir to protect us through the country, told us was built by an invading horde who came from beyond Khotan and were called Sakpas. There is a similar temple said to have been built by these people at Nilt, and it is also believed that they penetrated as far as Gilgit, which they held 1000 years ago. It is undoubtedly true that there is a race called Sakpa in Tibet which exists by robbery. Dutreuil de Rhins, a French explorer, was murdered by these people a few years ago. They are Buddhists, and are probably responsible for the well-known rock-carvings of Gilgit.

Just below the glacier is the favourite hunting-ground of the Mir of Hunza, who occasionally has big drives at which large numbers of ibex are killed. The road at this point was the most difficult we had yet experienced, being exceedingly precipitous and involving frequent risks of a bath in the river. The rocks over which we had to pick our way at a giddy elevation were so steep that I took my boots off in order to obtain a firmer footing. My companion avoided these precipices by fording the river twelve times during the march; but the water being deep and icy cold, he was no better off than I in his choice of roads. I learnt, however, that later on in the year, when the river is low, there is little difficulty in the passage. Beyond the Kungerab entrance to the valley the road rapidly ascends, the river being fringed with willow and long grass, and after a while passes Misgah, the last inhabited spot in the Kunjut Valley. Here we stopped the night at an elevation of 10,200 feet, and I was surprised to find that even at this altitude the inhabitants succeed in producing sufficient barley for their needs. Trees however, are absent, and the aspect of the surroundings is dismal. This was the last house we slept in for many a long day, and we made the most of it. The houses in Kunjut are worthy of notice on account of their architecture. They are strongly built, with massive beams and uprights,

which are brought from far-off nullahs at the cost of enormous labour. Most of them contain three rooms, the largest provided with raised sleeping platforms on either side, while a square opening in the roof serves the purpose of a chimney.

Beyond Misgah there was no further need of coolie labour, it being possible to employ ponies once more. And we noticed a marked change in the conformation of the mountains, which here become rounded at their summit instead of serrated with the sharp peaks which characterise the Hindu Kush. Our next camp was at Lob Jangal, where we pitched our tents in a grassy spot surrounded by willow-trees and stunted jungle, in agreeable contrast to the desolate country we had so lately traversed. In the afternoon Mirza Bai, a cross-bred Yarkandi, who is stationed on the Taghdumbash Pamir to ensure the safe transit of the post between Gilgit and Kashgar, arrived with twenty yaks and seven ponies. He told us that the Kirghiz Beg in charge of the Taghdumbash had sent a number of yaks and ponies to await our arrival at Kukturuk, a nullah facing the Kilik Pass on the opposite side of the Pamir, but that we had been such a long time in arriving that the animals had returned to the lower ground. With Mirza Bai were half a dozen Kirghiz, the first of these curious nomads I had seen, and their appearance was certainly strange. Their dress consisted of a long quilted cotton robe, with round cap lined with fur and long leather boots made in Yarkand or Kashgar. Over all was an enormous sheepskin coat of shaggy appearance confined by a puggari, or scarf, wound many times round the waist. The yaks and ponies arrived later, and as I had no further need of



BY FORDING THE RIVER TWELVE TIMES DURING THE MARCH

the Astori animals, I dismissed the men with their beasts, after handing them a handsome backsheesh in compensation for the difficulties of the road. With their customary fondness for perverting the truth, these men subsequently complained that neither my companion nor I had paid them the wages agreed on. Fortunately I had sent a letter by them to McMahon, telling him exactly what I had paid them, and I don't suppose they got much change out of him by their lying.

Just above Lob Jangal is the junction of the two nullahs, leading, the one to the Kilik, the other to the Mintaka Pass, which in their turn lead down to the Taghdumbash Pamir. The Mintaka was, I learnt, a mass of loose rocks along the whole of the Hunza side, and although not really difficult to a mountaineer, is practically impossible to laden animals other than yaks, and extremely dangerous to the horseman. Its height is 15,600 feet. I therefore decided to choose the Kilik route which, in addition to affording a better road, is 200 feet lower than the Mintaka. The next day we started upwards towards the Kilik, camping by some ruined shepherds' huts at Sheru-Maidan, 13,600 feet high. The sun disappeared behind the hills at two o'clock, and it immediately began to freeze. By nine P.M. the temperature in our tent had sunk to 15° Fahr. The pass appears to contain game, for I noticed by the aid of a glass, a herd of upwards of fifty *Ovis Poli* as we were about to pitch our tent. They were, however, well out of rifle-shot.

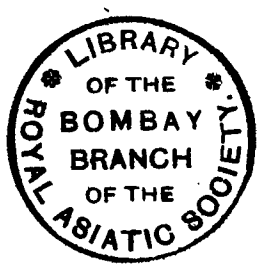
The summit of the Kilik, the ascent to which is quite easy, is a flattish plateau covered with stones. This is the actual crest of the Hindu Kush and the boundary of British territory. Here we tarried some time, admiring the magnificent panorama which presented itself. Behind, as far as the eye could reach, lay range upon range of mountain ridges and dazzling peaks comprising the various chains of the Hindu Kush. In the far distance, towering over all its rivals fully 200 miles from where we stood, rose the snowy dome of Nanga Parbat, which, from an altitude of 26,800 feet, dwarfed all around. On the far side of the pass we got our first glimpse of the Pamir, which appeared in marked contrast to my expectations. Below us lay an easy grassy slope leading to the Taghdum-

bash, which from this point appeared to be a level valley about a mile wide, with a frozen stream in the centre. To the right the Pamir could be seen to turn in the direction of Tash-kurgan, elsewhere on every side extended range upon range of bare, snow-topped peaks. As I gazed upon the magnificent panorama at my feet, I realised that I stood at the point where three great empires meet. To the north, reaching from the snow-clad peaks of the Pamirs, across the oases of Central Asia, and thence over the steppes of Siberia to the ice-clad regions of the Kara Sea, lay the Russian Empire in its vast expansiveness. To the east lay the deserts which demarcate the boundaries of the Celestial Empire with its primæval civilisation and its many millions whose one desire is to keep aloof from the comity of modern Powers. To the southward, across the mighty chasms of the Hindu Kush, lay the regions of British India, the Asiatic centre of the empire on which the sun never sets. And hard by to the west lay another State which, tottering in its decadence, is destined to become the future frontier of Britain in the East. Afghanistan, which, like most threatened States, has lived for long, is surely near its final absorption, a fate which is only postponed until its present ruler passes away. Standing here on the advance outpost of civilisation, I felt myself lifted beyond the everyday interests of life, and became absorbed in the contemplation of the grandeurs of Nature until, by the very contrast of things, I recalled the faces of those at home, and was brought to acknowledge the preponderance of the ties we cherish even over the magnificence of the roof of the world.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;
But my dreams are dreams of England, home, that word so infinite.

CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE PAMIRS TO KASHGAR



Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
    Even soaring Fancy staggers,
    Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the slightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
    Is less instinct with thee:
. . . Spirit of Nature! thou!
    Imperishable as this scene
Here is thy fitting temple.

SHELLEY.

NURLA BAI, THE MOST REMOTE POSTMAN OF H.M.'S INDIAN POSSESSIONS, AND KALLICK

CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE PAMIRS TO KASHGAR

The view from the Kilik—The Pamirs—Inhabitants—The Kirghiz —Akois—The Taghdumbash—To whom belonging—Pamir sheep —Medical practice—Paying for my fee—I try for *Ovis Poli*—A Stalk—My first bag—Tashkurgan—The Chinese garrison—Racing in Sarikol—Winning a certainty.—Round Murtagh Ata—Arrival at Kashgar.

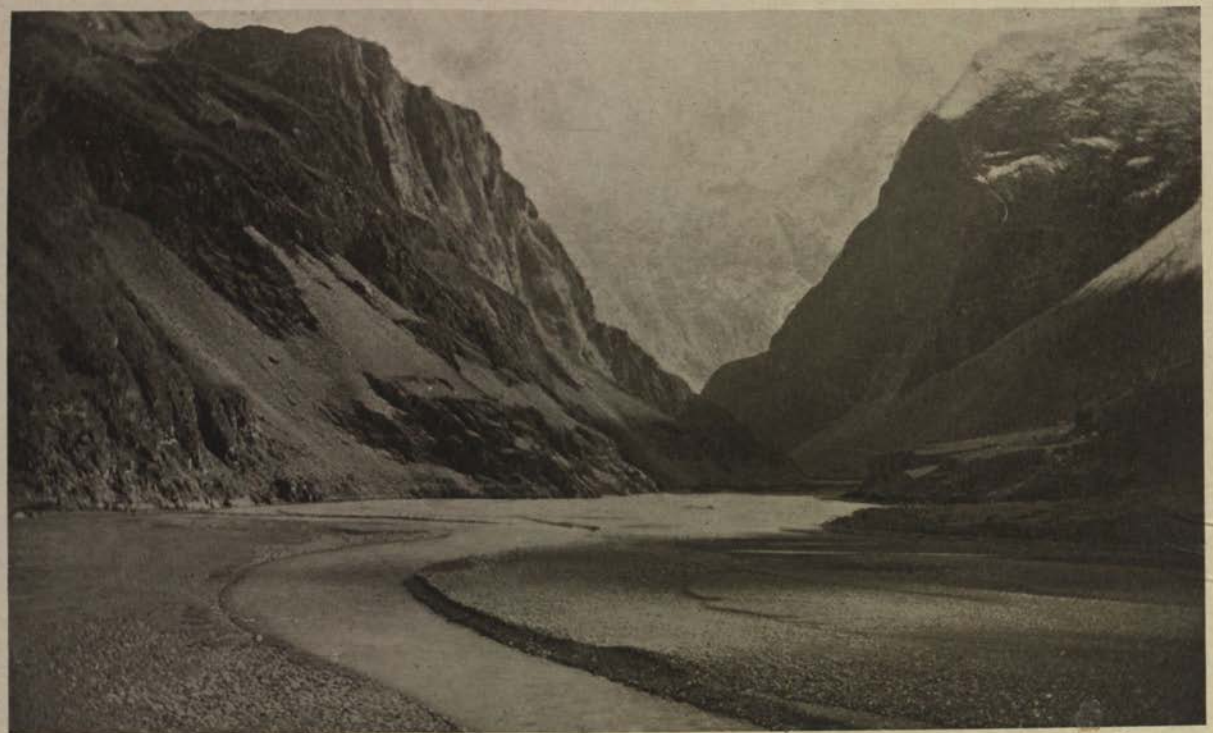
THE Pamirs are a series of valleys connected with an extensive mountain system in which centuries of glacial action, together with the effects of wind and weather, have gradually worn down the mountain spurs and filled up the intervening valleys, smoothing the ruggedness of the water channels and blunting the excrescences of the lower slopes until a series of comparatively flat plains alternate with rugged snow-covered and glacier-bound ridges. The word Pamir signifies desert. It is derived from the Khokandese. The great elevation at which the Pamirs lie, having an average of over 12,000 feet, with

dividing mountain ranges attaining an altitude of from 17,000 feet to 18,000 feet, has given rise to the term "roof of the world," which is generally applied to the region by picturesque writers.

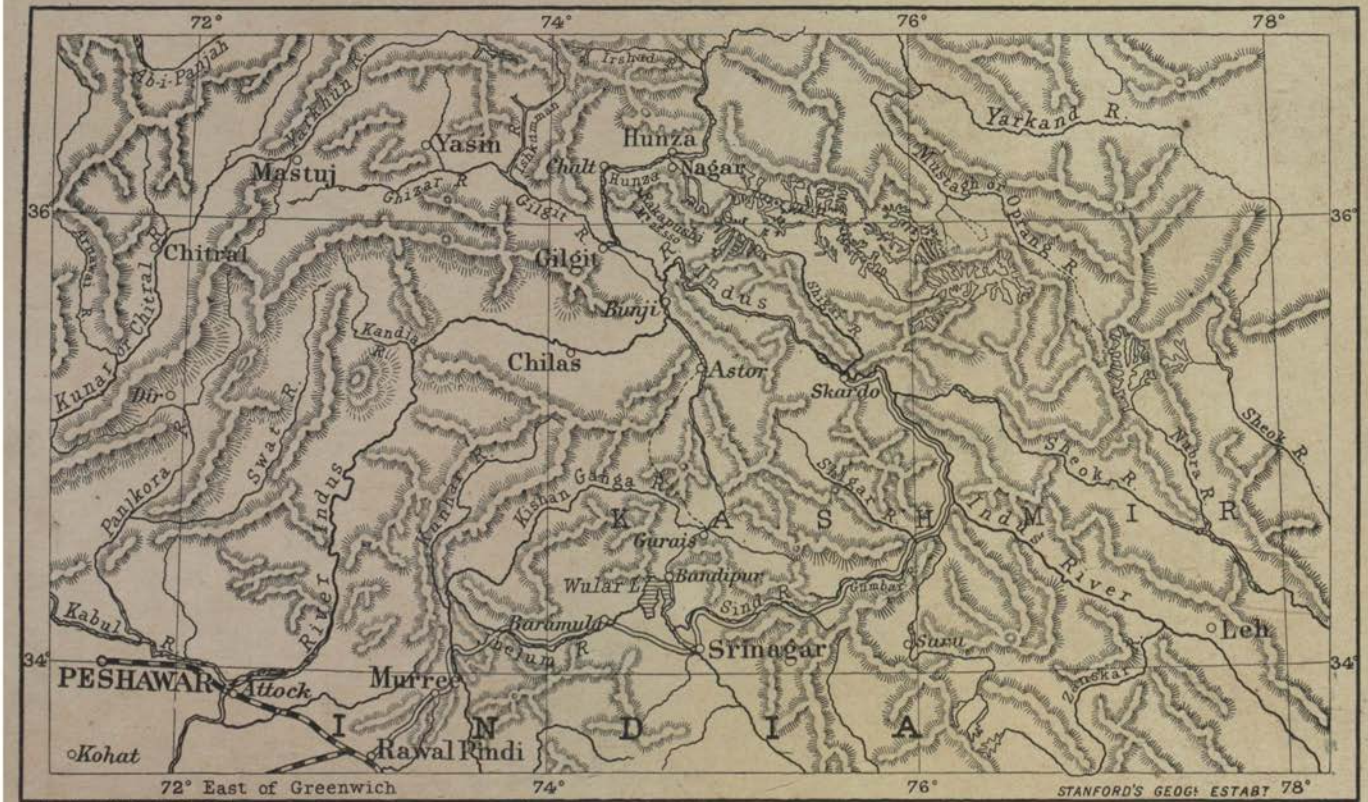
As I stood upon the summit of the Kilik Pass I got my first glance of the Pamir region, as I have already described, and before continuing the account of my journey into the wildest part of innermost Asia it may be useful if I pause in my narrative and give some details respecting the country concerned. I do not feel called upon to enlarge upon the origin and gradual development of the Pamir system. That has been fully discussed by such authorities as Captain John Wood, Colonel T. E. Gordon, Elisée Reclus, Captain Younghusband, Lord Curzon, Colonel Sir Thomas Holditch, Sven Hedin, and others too numerous to mention. I propose, therefore, to limit myself to a brief statement of the geographical features of the Pamirs and their surroundings. The main characteristics of a Pamir are the bordering presence of snow-crowned mountain peaks, a valley of varying width in parts consisting of sandstone-covered wastes, in others covered with stunted grass broken with swampy patches, the whole intersected by waterways, which in places unite and expand into lakes of considerable size. A Pamir is, in plain fact, a mountain valley of glacial formation, differing from ordinary mountain valleys only by reason of its superior altitude and the degree to which it has been filled up by alluvium, until it has obtained almost the appearance of a plain. The leading visible features of the Pamirs are the scarcity of trees, the abundance of pasturage, and the severity of the climate. For more than half the year the whole of the Pamir region is covered by snow, the lakes frozen, and the passes closed.

There are in all eight Pamirs, the leading characteristics of which may be summarised as follows:

(1) The TAGHDUMBASH PAMIR, situated immediately to the north of the Kilik Pass. This stretches from the Wakhan Pass on the west to the Chinese fort of Tashkurgan on the north-east, and belongs to a different watershed to all the rest. It varies in elevation from 10,000 to 15,000 feet, and ranges in



THE FIRST VIEW OF BOḌAKSHAN



KASHMIR, KUNJUT, AND THE FRONTIERS OF INNERMOST ASIA

breadth from one to five miles. This Pamir is nominally under the jurisdiction of the Chinese, and its population comprises nomadic Kirghiz and fugitives from Wakhan. Governmental authority is represented by sixty soldiers in the fort at Tash-kurgan, which, for all practical purposes, might be non-existent.

(2) The PAMIR-I-WAKHAN, one of the smallest, comprises a grassy valley alongside the head stream of the Oxus, with a length of some twenty miles. It is throughout extremely narrow, and is uninhabited except by occasional Kirghiz, who bring their flocks in the summer to graze on the excellent grass which abounds on the valley side.

(3) The GREAT PAMIR, comprising Victoria Lake and a number of smaller sheets of water, with the length of eighty miles and a width varying from one to six miles.

(4) The LITTLE PAMIR, with Lake Chakmak and the former site of the Chinese fort of Aktash. It has a total length of sixty miles, and varies in width from one to four miles.

(5) The ALICHUR PAMIR, which stretches to the borders of Shighnan, and contains the Yeshil Kul and the Sasik Kul, or Putrid Lake.

(6) The SAREZ PAMIR, which includes the portion of the Upper Murghab, and comprises the Russian headquarter fort of Murghab.

(7) The KHARGOSH PAMIR, which contains the basin of the Karakul Lake.

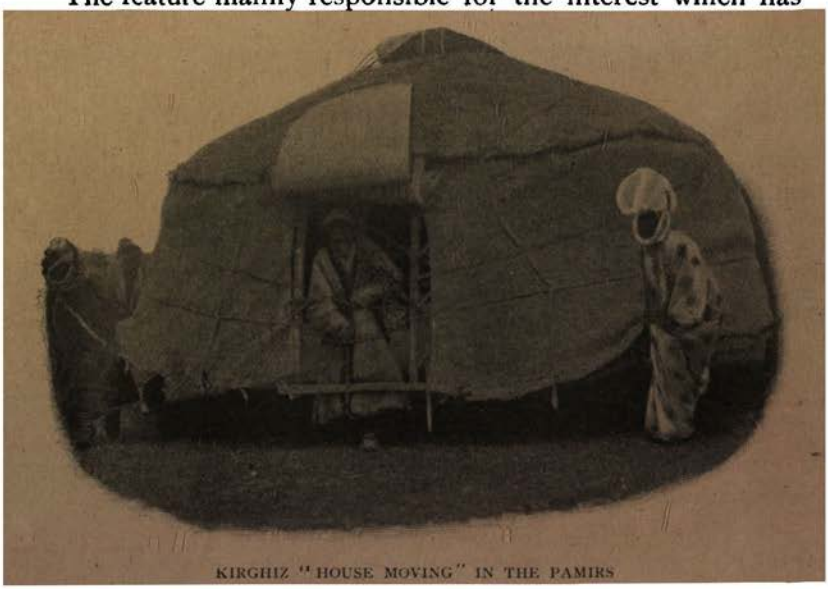
(8) The RANG KUL PAMIR, containing the lake of that name, formerly a Chinese but now a Russian possession.

The above are the Pamirs proper, besides which there are several districts which, though sometimes alluded to as Pamirs, do not actually possess any claim to the denomination. Thus Sarikol is not a Pamir at all, but a tract of country bordering the Taghdumbash, from which it is distinct; the same may also be said of the Shimshal Pamir and the Mariom Pamir, which is an ordinary mountain valley. The total area covered by the Pamirs proper may be put at 22,500 square miles.

The people who inhabit this region are mainly Kirghiz, interspersed by occasional tribes of Tajiks and people from

Sarikol and Wakhan. These nomads live by means of their flocks, and move about according to the season and the state of the pasture. No reliable estimation of the population is available, but it is small, and probably stationary, owing to the fact that the severity of the climate limits the number of births, the great majority of the infants in the winter being stillborn.

The feature mainly responsible for the interest which has

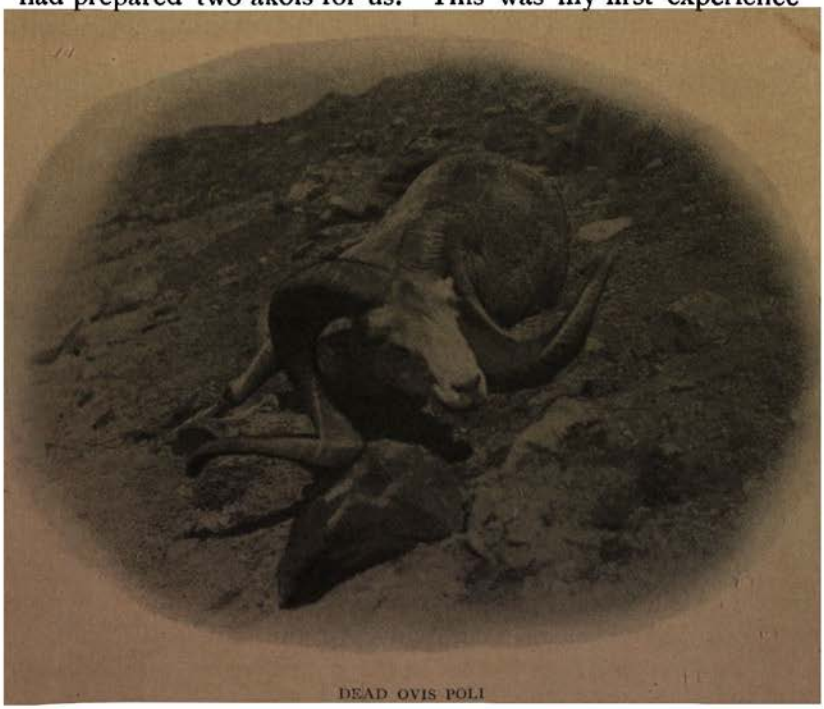


KIRGHIZ "HOUSE MOVING" IN THE PAMIRS

of late years been manifested in the Pamir region is the variety of wild animals which everywhere abounds, most notable among which is the *Ovis Poli*, a wild sheep of great size, which is found in most parts of the Pamir region. The peculiarity of these beasts are their horns, which at times attain extraordinary dimensions, one head now in possession of Lord Roberts has horns measuring seventy-five inches from base to tip, with a base circumference of sixteen inches, though this is an exceptional specimen. In addition to the *Ovis Poli*, one meets on the Pamirs the ibex, a common fox, the wolf, brown bear, the golden marmot, the Tibetan hare, the ibis, gull, owl, kite, and many birds of the plover and lark tribe. The Pamirs

may therefore be regarded as a species of sportsman's paradise, and few travellers who have visited the region have failed to return with a collection of trophies.

We descended from the Kilik Pass, led by Nurla Bai, down an easy slope which led to the Pamir below, and crossing to the opposite side of the valley, entered a nullah where the Kirghiz had prepared two akois for us. This was my first experience



DEAD OVIS POLI

of these curious dwelling-places, which are employed by most of the nomad tribes of Asia. The akoi is a hut composed of a light wooden framework arranged in circular form. Over the framework is stretched a layer of felt, while the inside is hung with rugs, which are also laid over the ground. A circular opening is left in the roof to allow the exit of the smoke from the fire, which is lit in the centre of the hut; the fuel employed being dried dung, which resembles peat when burning, and is not so very disagreeable; the only other fuel known in these regions is the root of the bhourtsa or wild

lavender. The yourt or akoi is exceedingly warm and commodious, and its circular form and dome-shaped roof enables it to withstand the fierce winds which blow on the Pamirs. Being tired I soon composed myself in the comfortable lodging provided, and was fast asleep by the fire when a messenger came in from Deasy, who had remained behind to take some observations, to say that he couldn't follow us so far, and asking me to have the akio taken back to him. It took just half an hour to take the structure down, but it was amusing to watch how the snug shelter rapidly became resolved into a few bundles of sticks and a pile of felt, with which a couple of yaks were promptly laden. We retraced our steps in company with our worldly goods, and a few miles back found Deasy busy with his instruments. The afternoon was beautifully fine, the atmosphere clear and bright, and in places where we were sheltered from the wind the sunshine sufficed to keep us warm. As soon as the sun had sunk a great fiery ball in the west, a sharp frost set in, and the disappearing sunbeams shed a soft, rosy flush over the snow-clad peaks to the east, mounting higher and higher till it lingered on the summit of a gigantic mountain, and then disappeared to be succeeded by a marvellous effect in purple and grey. With the advent of twilight came that extraordinary stillness which can only be experienced on the Pamirs. It had been quiet before, but as twilight faded into night Nature became hushed, and I

BUILDING A KIRGHIZ TENT

felt myself enraptured by the marvellous loneliness, and the overwhelming silence of this mysterious region.

> All heaven and earth are still though not in sleep,
> But breathless as we grow when feeling most;
> And silent as we stand in thoughts too deep.
>
> BYRON.

It was on the 20th of October that we made our first camp on the roof of the world. There were twelve degrees of frost inside the yourt at dinner time, despite a large fire which we carefully tended, but by the aid of a heavy coat and fur boots and gloves we did not suffer. In the early morning the thermometer registered one degree below zero, and the rarefaction of the air prevented my sleeping well. We made the height of the camp 14,000 feet, and I was glad when daylight came, and there being no wind, I dressed and went outside to see the sun rise. The atmosphere was astonishingly clear, and the surrounding mountain ranges well defined. Away to the west the Wakhan mountains were radiant with light, which presently caught the peaks on the Russian frontier. The rosy flush shed by the rising sun gradually crept lower and lower until the whole of the plain was illuminated, and finally the sun appeared over the crest of the great mountain barrier at the eastern end of the Taghdumbash, when the Hindu Kush range to the south lit up with surpassing brilliancy. It was a marvellous sight to see the sun rise over the crests of four kingdoms.

The day was fine and comparatively warm. Deasy continued his observations, sending one of his men up the Kukturuk nullah to erect a pillar, and the subsequent flashing of the heliograph from its summit looked very well. The man returned towards even, and reported having seen a number of small animals, probably female *Ovis Poli*. At nightfall two Kirghiz shikaris came to us, one of whom, by name Mirza Bai, appeared intelligent. I engaged him for myself, my companion taking the other, and after a conference we decided to part here for a time, as Deasy wished to take some further observations, while I was anxious to get some shooting. It was close

on ten o'clock next morning when we parted, and I left Deasy as he set out to climb the hill behind the camp in order to erect a station there.

The Kirghiz loaded my baggage on eleven yaks and a camel. We went down the Taghdumbash over hummocky grass just becoming brown from the effects of the autumn. The shikari made the pace, which was rapid, and by three o'clock we had covered twenty miles and reached the encampment which is permanently maintained by the Chinese at the entrance to the Mintaka Pass. Kallick and Nurla Bai had preceded us, and we found a roomy yourta, an altogether superior dwelling, awaiting us. The outside of this structure was covered with a species of reed matting to serve as a further protection from the wind. The inside was provided with a number of embroidered numdahs and rugs, spread out temptingly by the side of a good fire, for me to repose on. Nor had they neglected the needs of the inner man, a bowl of kymak, cream made in the Devonshire style, awaited me. And the excellent chupatties which accompanied it were quite a delicacy, considering that the flour of which they were made had been brought all the way from Yarkand. After tea Nurla Bai brought round some Kirghiz, and we had a long talk, Kallick acting as interpreter. The former was very communicative. He told me that he received twenty rupees a month from the British representative in Kashgar to superintend the post from Mintaka to Tashkurgan in Sarikol, from which point Macartney's Kashgaris took it on. Some years ago the post was robbed by Russians and the letters stolen, but since Nurla had been appointed to look after matters no attempt had been made to waylay the post. Parties of Cossacks used frequently to ride down on to the Taghdumbash, but since the Boundary Commission had settled the frontier, they did not extend their patrols so far.

The question as to whom the Taghdumbash Pamir rightly belongs is a moot point. The Chinese have always claimed it as theirs, but the inhabitants, Kirghiz and Sarikolis alike, have for generations paid tribute to the Mir of Hunza, who is a

British vassal, so that presumably we have a voice in the matter. The fear of provoking further Russian aggression in this region, however, probably accounts for our not substantiating our claim, and it is perhaps just as well that matters should remain in *status quo* so long as China continues our immediate neighbour. A similar state of things obtains in Kunjut, where the Mir of Hunza pays tribute in gold to the Amban of Yarkand, as well as to the Maharajah of Kashmir, who holds his country under suzerainty of the Indian Government. Every year an envoy departs from Hunza, taking with him a number of ounces of gold dust, which he hands to the Amban of Yarkand, receiving in return various presents, generally of greater intrinsic value than the gold dust, for the Mir of Hunza. On his return journey the envoy stops in Sarikol, and on the Taghdumbash, and takes toll from the inhabitants in the form of numdahs, wool, sheep or silver.

The Kirghiz owner of the yourta was an interesting character. He had formerly lived at Aktash, on the Little Pamir, but had quitted the place when the Russians made their appearance there. He said that the Russians were very high-handed in their dealings with the Kirghiz, and it was of frequent occurrence for Cossacks to enter a yourta and abstract what they required. He assured me that the Kirghiz regarded the English as kind masters and liberal in all their dealings, though no doubt the contrast drawn between the two nations was largely due to a desire to curry favour with me. The Kirghiz are unmitigated liars, and seemingly prefer to pervert the truth whenever possible. I therefore place little reliance on the tales told me of Russian harshness, nor do I deem it necessary to repeat them here. There is, however, no question as to the excellent impression made by British visitors to the Pamirs on the natives. Now that the predatory habits of the Kunjutis have been restrained they and the people of Sarikol and the Taghdumbash appear to be on the best of terms, and it seems to be recognised that this improved condition of things is entirely due to the good offices of the Indian Government. The flocks of sheep, which form practically the only wealth of the people of this region,

are worthy of notice on account of certain peculiarities. The domestic sheep of the Pamir affords the very best mutton in the world. It is of the fat-tailed species, the tail consisting mainly of a ball of fat which at times weighs as much as twenty pounds. The fatty deposit is a wonderful provision of Nature which in this severe climate provides the animal with a reserve of nutriment which enables it to withstand the intense cold and the poor feeding which so often falls to its lot. The flocks are driven in at night from the surrounding slopes by Kirghiz children mounted on yaks, which they direct by a single rope passed through the nostril.

The next morning a girl of sixteen was brought to me to be doctored. She complained of having been ill for six months, and appeared to be in considerable pain. I assured her people of my ignorance of the art of medicine, but they would take no denial, and, diagnosing her complaint to be a severe attack of neglected indigestion, I gave her half a cupful of castor-oil in warm milk, which she took with apparent gusto. I trust my prescription effected a cure. Her people appeared highly delighted at the result of the consultation, and presented me with a fine sheep which, all things considered, I deemed a very handsome fee. I parted from the Kirghiz with much ceremony, involving an extended course of handshaking, after which we succeeded in tearing ourselves away and resumed our journey down the Taghdumbash. On getting clear of the Kirghiz I noticed that my party had been reinforced by a newcomer, and was somewhat astonished on inquiring his business to learn that he was waiting to be paid for the sheep. I duly liquidated the cost of the gift, and got rid of him just before we arrived at the entrance of Bayik nullah, in which, according to Mirza Bai, the largest *Ovis Poli* are frequently found. At this point there was a Karoul, or settlement of seven yourtas, intended to guard the approach to the nullah, at the head of which is the Russian frontier and the road leading to Ak Tash. The arrangements for my shooting up this nullah were soon made, and the rest of the afternoon was spent in sorting my belongings and settling what things would be required. I received rather a shock while thus engaged to find that a

number of cartridges in the magazines had got damp, presumably during the frequent crossings of the Hunza river. Fortunately they were not any the worse for it, and I had some rifle-practice by way of preparation for the morrow. We had been following the valley down for two whole days, and the cold of our present camp was far less severe than that previously experienced. The minimum temperature registered during the night was only 12° of frost, a mere trifle in these regions.

The next morning was a busy one, as the men who had brought on my baggage from the point where the Astoris had turned back had to be paid off. Nurla Bai had made the original bargain, and I handed him the money with which to settle. Shortly afterwards there was great squabbling among the men, who raised a terrible hullabaloo as they wildly gesticulated round my head man, and it was evident that he was stopping a larger proportion of their earnings by way of commission on the transaction than was deemed equitable by them. Fortunately my ignorance of the language prevented me from being personally appealed to, and I remained excused from taking part in the shindy. The dispute was eventually settled, and we got off about ten o'clock with four camels, a couple of ponies, and two shooting yaks to carry myself and the shikari. Shortly after leaving camp we diverged from the watercourse and ascended to some likely-looking ibex ground, but found nothing. We therefore rejoined the party just as the sun disappeared behind the mountain tops, and it began to get cold. Half an hour saw the yourts up and fires lighted. We had been ascending all day, and registered 17° of frost that night in the yourt. But I was getting acclimatised, and the sleeplessness of the first few nights had passed off, with the result that I slept very well, and rose refreshed at 3 A.M., ready to start to try a smaller nullah leading off the main one to the right in the hopes of coming across *Ovis Poli*. I was enveloped in a mass of warm clothing in order to exclude the bitter cold; besides my body-wear I wore two large sheepskin coats and three pairs of sheepskin gloves, with the result that I was quite helpless

and incapable of mounting even with assistance. I was accordingly lifted on to the yak and just succeeded in clinging to the front of the saddle, while a Kirghiz led the animal by a rope. There was no moon, but the stars were shining brightly as we quitted the main track, and branched up a steep ravine on the right. The going was frightful; the road was a mixture of large boulders and deep holes, but the yak was a wonderful equilibrist and puffed and blew hard as, with his nose to the ground, he toiled steadily upwards over a frozen watercourse without ever making a mistake. The men slipped about in all directions, but the yak's cloven feet gave him so firm a foothold that he never even stumbled. I clung on for dear life, digging my heels well into my beast's hairy sides as he careered in the dark over rocks and ice, plentifully cut up by crevasses, and wondering whether, when he fell, I should have the luck to lie on the top. The yak did not fall, however, and after four miles of this sort of thing we stopped. The beasts were secured to a big stone and immediately laid down and began to chew the cud contentedly. We had to wait an hour till it was light enough to see anything. The cold was intense, but when the dawn at length came we were rewarded by the view that met our gaze; the various tints of colour which gradually tinged the peaks before the sun actually touched them were magnificent. As soon as it was light enough to use our glasses we eagerly scanned the hill-sides, but saw no signs of game, and so we turned back by the same ravine, and I puzzled still more than before as to how the yaks had managed to traverse such a horrible road in the dusk. As we came in sight of the main nullah I saw that the camp was just getting under way, and we arrived just as they came up to where our path rejoined the main valley. Soon after this we got sight of two *Ovis Poli* feeding high up on the hillside, but they made off, and we did not follow. Then Mirza Bai led us further up the nullah, where we camped under the Bayik Pass, while the shikari climbed a neighbouring hill in order to use his telescope. He returned without having anything to report, and told us he had decided to cross the pass the next day, and try the Little Pamirs.

Three o'clock found us on the way. The heavens were ablaze with light, Sirius being especially brilliant. The ascent was extremely steep, and even the yaks had to stop every few yards to take breath. There was nothing to guide us, the mountain being quite trackless. We just made straight up the hillside to the depression in the crest which marked the site of the pass. The last few hundred yards was very trying,

THE ASCENT OF THE KILIK PASS—THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW PASSES BY WHICH INDIA COULD BE INVADED FROM THE PAMIRS

the going being over an almost perpendicular *arrête* of *shale* into which the heavy beasts sank deeply at every step, while the slipping rubble carried them back again each time they took a forward step. At length, by dint of much hauling in front and more encouragement from behind, the yaks carried us safely to the summit, where we halted a while and then crossed the small plateau and began to descend. We followed a streamlet for some three or four miles till we came to a point where a branch nullah turns to the left. Here we stopped, and leaving the yaks behind the sheltering ridge, we crept up to the top and used our glasses. Twilight was just

on us. Straight across the branch valley we saw a number of animals feeding, but they were too far off for us to make them out. As the light increased we saw that they were ibex, quite a large herd of at least a hundred head, occupied in feeding. Leaving the yaks in charge of the Kunjuti who had accompanied me, we crossed the valley unobserved, and having climbed 1000 feet or so, reached the grassy plateau where we had seen the ibex. They had, however, moved higher up, and by their evident restlessness betrayed their uneasiness. They had probably caught sight of the yaks below, which we also could plainly distinguish from the edge of the plateau. We watched them going higher up towards the rocks, and noticed there were some fine old bucks among them. But they were too far off to make sure of one, so they were allowed to go. It was not yet really light, but I was astonished on looking over some rocks to see what looked like two grey ponies grazing 100 yards off. I called Mirza Bai's attention to the spectacle, and he immediately pulled me to the ground, whispering "guljar," the Turki name for the *Ovis Poli* ram. It was too late, however, for the animals had got our wind and made off, and we had to rest content with watching them disappear in the distance.

We next turned our attention towards the upper part of the nullah and came upon a sight calculated to gladden the heart of a sportsman. Half a mile distant, right in the centre of the valley, were two fine rams quietly feeding, while close to them browsed a small herd of ibex totally unaware of impending danger, higher up were two other lots of *Ovis Poli*, about a dozen in each flock, several very fine bucks in each and all with good heads. It was a splendid sight! Scanning the nearest rams carefully through a telescope, we noticed that one of them was of very unusual size. They kept on raising their heads and looking about, so that we had a good opportunity for observing the curious appearance of their long curling horns, which gives them such a fantastic appearance. As we watched them they fed down into a small depression, which hid us from their view. Down the hill we went as hard as we could pelt, and then crawled to the edge of the little declivity into which we

had seen them disappear; carefully we climbed up, and lying down full length on the ground, peeped cautiously over the crest of the hillock expecting to see them close by. But they had disappeared! We were opposite to the entrance of a small stony nullah, and we searched the rocks with our eyes in quest of our quarry, until we saw them slowly picking their

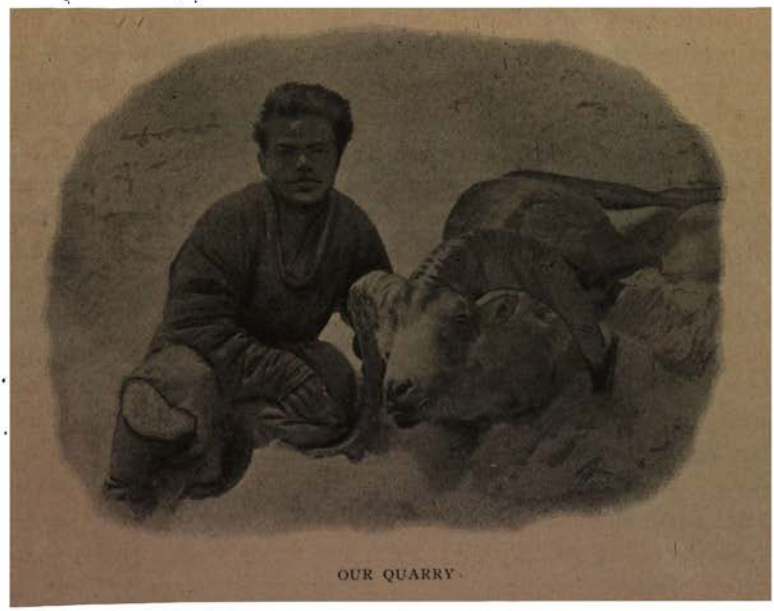
A FANTASTIC APPEARANCE

way up the ascent which was far too exposed for us to venture on. Breathlessly we watched the animals increase their distance, until suddenly they paused, and having taken a good look round lay down about 400 yards above us. We studied the situation carefully, and began to speculate how we could come to quarters with least risk of disturbing them. The nullah offered no direct means of approach, but it seemed to me if we could reach the summit of the rocks enclosing it unseen we might follow the ridge and then descend under cover of the largest boulders until we came on the *Poli*. We accordingly left our superfluous clothing, food, &c., with the

Kirghiz, and started on what proved to be a good hour's stiff climb over loose ground, involving many a slip and the constant sound of rolling stones. On reaching the supposed summit we found that there were still other ridges behind, but at last these had also been surmounted, and we stood on the topmost peak, along which we sped with eyes fixed in the direction of the nullah below. But no game were visible, they had evidently moved again. Possibly they had heard the sound of the boulders we had disturbed. But we went on anxiously examining the ground in the depths below. Suddenly Mirza Bai seized my arm and exclaimed in Turki, "Look, Sahib, there they are." And there sure enough they were, their spreading horns being all that was visible over some rocks, behind which they were resting, some 400 yards below us. There was nothing for it but to go down. The descent was steep and noisy, and I feared every moment that the sound of the slithering stones we dislodged would alarm our game. Half way down we halted and took off our boots, so as to go more quietly, and then I noticed that the wind which had been blowing down hill had suddenly shifted and was now coming up the nullah, and I realised that the *Poli* would be sure to get the wind of the Kirghiz, whom we had left in charge of our things below. The notion had barely flashed across my mind when my anticipation was realised, for I saw the two great sheep coming up the nullah at a lumbering gallop straight towards us: they were evidently so intent on getting away from the man behind they neglected their usual caution as to what might be in front. Seeing that they must pass within fifty yards of where we stood I sat down and covered the whitest of the two, which I knew should be the largest; on they came pell-mell until almost abreast of us they halted out of breath. My hands were quivering with excitement as I pulled, half expecting to miss from sheer eagerness, but the ram fell dead, and the second beast pulling himself up suddenly turned and made off across the ravine. Another shot, a miss this time, but the 200-yard sight was instantly slid up, and a third shot claimed him, thus justifying the reputation of my little Mannlicher, which is indeed in every respect a perfect weapon.

My shikari's delight forthwith got the better of him; he became delirious with joy at the sight of so much good meat in front of him, and he seized my hands and kissed them and my feet. Then we went over to our quarry and measured the horns, spanning them with our hands, and found them both handsome trophies.

The Kirghiz whom we had left at the entrance of the nullah now joined us, and he also was in a frantic state of excitement.



OUR QUARRY.

Between us we cut off the heads and quartered the carcases, and later Pero Loman came up with the yaks, which we loaded up and sent back to camp, while Mirza Bai and I went further up the nullah to see if we could get another stalk. It was still early, barely two o'clock, and shortly after some rams came down to graze from the top of the valley. We found it impossible, however, to approach them, though we kept our shelter all day in the hope that they would come in our direction if we gave them the chance. But they didn't, and getting weary of the cramped position and beginning to feel the cold I tried to stalk them, but they got our wind and made off, and we found our way back to camp over the pass a long

and tiring walk, but one which in our exhilarated spirits we didn't mind a bit. I received a most enthusiastic welcome from all the retainers when I got back to camp at dark, and I lost no time in running the tape over my victims' horns, when I was gratified to find that they were even finer specimens than I had supposed. The larger one measured sixty-four inches and the smaller fifty-six inches in length. I also weighed the larger animal in pieces, and found it turned the scale at thirty-six stone.

The next day, on the same ground, I obtained another with sixty-inch horns. I noticed, however, that the *Poli* were far shyer than they had been at our first meeting, and thought it wise to seek new ground. I accordingly made an excursion down to Aktash, in the neighbourhood of which I saw a great many fine heads and shot two. I am sure that, counting the females, I saw as many as five hundred *Poli* in this district at one time.

After a week's shooting the game began to get scarce, so we shifted camp and returned to the Kirghiz station, where my baggage had been deposited, and here Deasy joined me, he having had very poor sport among the *Ovis*. We travelled together to Ujadbai lower down the Taghdambash, where we found a large encampment of Kirghiz, and where we had an excellent opportunity of observing Kirghiz life. These nomads exist almost entirely on the produce of their flocks, their staple article of diet is milk, which they take chiefly in the form of whey and dried curds. The meat they prefer is the wild sheep, or ibex, if they can succeed in killing them, but they rarely eat their own herds, keeping them for sale or barter. Grain they occasionally obtain as a luxury from Yarkand and Kashgar. I was especially struck by the indifference with which they mix different milks together. I have seen a mixture emanating from the yak, sheep and goat in the same pan, mares' and camels' milk being added to the above concoction; but the mixture does not seem to affect the richness of the clotted cream, which is universally prepared, and can be obtained in any akoi. The men are lazy and indolent, the women lead laborious lives and perform most of the necessary labour,

OVIS POLI SHOOTING—ALTITUDE ABOUT 16,000 FEET

but they enjoy greater freedom than the Mahomedan women of other countries, and they are always ready to converse with visitors. The yourts are very warm and comfortable, the floors being generally covered with nicely embroidered numdahs and rugs worked by the women.

While at Ujadbai, Kasim Beg, the chief of the Kirghiz, joined us. He was originally a refugee from Russian territory, but had been settled under Chinese jurisdiction for some years. When I returned to his place a year later I found that he had had a disagreement with the Amban at Tashkurgan, and had again fled to the Russians. Seventy Akois and their Kirghiz owners departed with him, of whom one half passed on to Afghan territory, where they are now settled near Bozai-Gumbaz, the remainder being with Kasim at Aktash. I subsequently learnt that the Chinese had instituted an irregular force of Kirghiz, whom they compelled to live in the fort at Tashkurgan, a mode of life to which they had been unused, and of which they showed their dislike by bolting. From this point we made an excursion up a branch of the Taghdumbash, which joins the main Pamir at Ujadbai, camping at its head, where is the junction of the nullahs leading to the Oprang and Kungerab Passes, both of which we visited, crossing the watershed of the former and descending as far as the Raskam daria. We found the road, hitherto unexplored, contained no unsurmountable difficulties.

We enjoyed some good sport in the Kungerab and Oprang nullahs, being assisted by some Sarikolis who inhabit this portion of the Taghdumbash and also the Mariom Pamir. Some of them are extremely wealthy, and possess some thousands of kine. In appearance they are quite unlike the Mongol type seen in the Kirghiz, and their features are straight and regular. Some of the women, whom they keep rigorously secluded, are fair and quite good looking. At the time of the year I write of, the big *Ovis* rams were high up on the snow line, and being now fat and satiated with grass, they rarely came down to the valleys. Having nothing to take up their attention they were extremely hard to approach, and I had many lengthy stalks, at great elevations, before I could circum-

vent them. According to the Kirghiz these animals become "mast" for the month preceding the rutting season, which commences about the middle of December. During this period they remain high up in the snow, not descending to feed until they join the females. The ground cannot compare in difficulty with markhor and ibex ground, the main trouble the sportsman has to contend with being the bare and noisy character of the mountain side, and the difficulty of respiration occasioned by the high altitudes.

At this point Deasy and I parted company, he proceeding to the Raskam daria, where he proposed to do some surveying *en route* to Yarkand, while I proceeded towards Tashkurgan, the principal settlement in Sarikol, where the Munshi Sher Mahomed Sher, whom the Indian Government have appointed to look after the Kashgar post and to assist British subjects generally, received me most hospitably. There are a hundred Chinese mounted troops stationed at the old fort at Tashkurgan. As soon as they heard that an Englishman had arrived they crowded round my abode, entering, as they pleased, without asking leave, and examining all my belongings most inquisitively. The Amban in command of the fort promptly paid me a state visit, which I duly returned, when I was invited to stay with him and witness some horse races which were to be run the following day. Sher Mahomed Sher assured me that the races could not fail to be amusing, and advised me not to miss the opportunity. So the next day I rode out with the Amban and his suite to the racecourse. Here I found all the Sarikolis and Kirghiz of the neighbourhood assembled, ready to receive the Amban with due homage. The principal event was a two-mile race, and a sum equal to £15 in value had been collected and was allotted, two-thirds to the winner and one-third to the second in the race. There were only two ponies entered, both of them by the Amban. I gathered that it would not be regarded as good form for any Kirghiz or Sarikoli to enter ponies to run against so exalted a personage. One of the ponies was led half-way to the winning-post, the course being about a mile. There being only two runners there were of course no losers, and the Amban, having awarded

A CAMP ON THE PAMIRS

the race to the pony which had been given a start of half a mile, pocketed both prizes and returned to his yamen in state, displaying the benignant smile of satisfaction. The whole procedure was delightfully simple, and suggests a new method of making racing a certainty, which I commend to the consideration of all interested in the turf. Of course no one dared to remonstrate with the Amban, and the Munshi told

MUSTAGH ATA—THE FATHER OF SNOW MOUNTAINS

me that he made a regular income in the course of the year by these race meetings, to which all the people are obliged to subscribe their quota under pain of his displeasure.

On leaving Tashkurgan I proceeded to Kashgar, passing round the base of Mustagh Ata, "the father of snow mountains," nearly 26,000 feet high, which the natives told me a Frenchman had vainly striven to scale the previous year. I subsequently learnt that the supposed Frenchman was the Swedish traveller, Sven Hedin. In the Gez defile I shot some fine ibex, and on November 20 emerged from the labyrinth of mountains which fringe the northern boundary of the Pamirs and entered on the plains of Turkestan, where the milder

climate proved a welcome change. At Tashbulak, the first village beyond the mountains, I found a regiment of Chinese soldiers, who, like the rest of their race, exhibited the most ardent curiosity respecting myself and my belongings. I succeeded, however, in eluding their desire to search my baggage, and entered Kashgar two days later, after having covered, to my calculation, 263 miles from the Kilik Pass, or 653 miles from Kashmir. I was accorded a hearty welcome by Mr. Macartney, the British representative, who made me feel as though I were visiting an old friend, and I settled down to spend my Christmas in Kashgar, the furthest point at which the British empire is represented in innermost Asia.

CHAPTER III

KASHGAR

Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age—collected fervours scarce allowed
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods.

SHELLEY.

GROUP OF INDIAN TRADERS IN KASHGAR

CHAPTER III

KASHGAR

The Agency—Chinese, British and Russian Representatives—The town of Kashgar—Its surroundings—Climate—Irrigation System—The Hazrat Afek—Trade—The Taotai—Civilities—The Chinese barracks—High repute of Englishmen—M. Petrovsky—His views on British Policy—His opinion of the Chinese—The Cossack Guard—Ancient MS.—The Takla Makhan desert—Christmas Day in Kashgar—*Mariage de convenance*—A Chinese banquet—Off to the Steppes.

MACARTNEY'S house was situated on the north side of the city on some high ground just outside the walls and overlooking the Kashgar river. It was of the type usual in this part of Asia, with a flat roof and several spacious courtyards. The house was surrounded by a garden full of fruit trees and shady poplars, and the restful aspect of the whole was extremely refreshing after our journey. Attached to the agency are an English-speaking Munshi and a hospital assistant, both up-country natives of good education, and the latter does much excellent work among the people, who are quite ignorant of the use of medicine. I found that I had arrived at an exciting moment, as information had reached the Taotai that Deasy was about to erect boundary pillars along the Taghdumbash

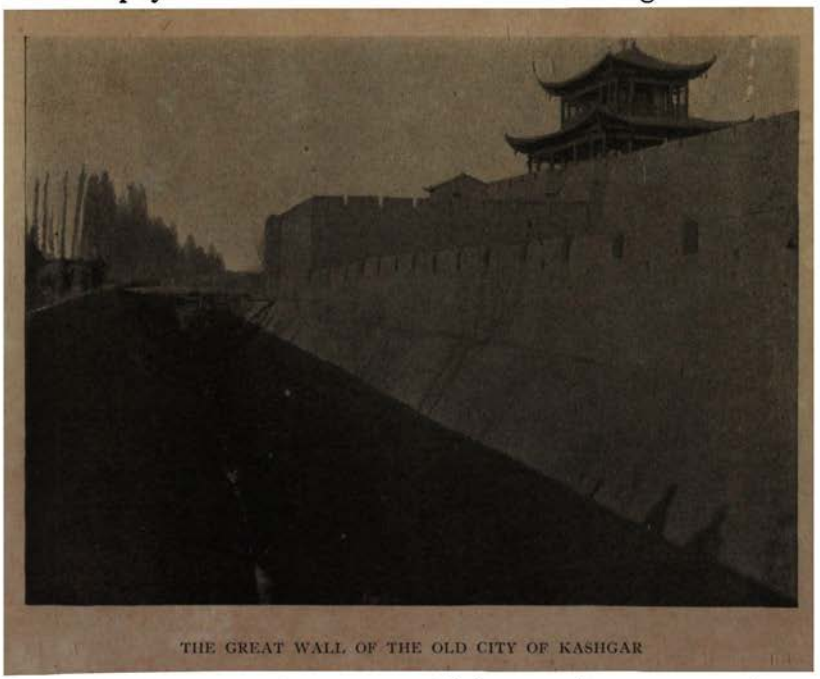
Pamir, whereby the British frontier was to be considerably extended. On the assumption that this action was prompted by political motives the Chinese were greatly perturbed. Fortunately I succeeded in allaying these suspicions by explaining that Deasy was not working in the Government service, and that the pillars he had placed on some of the mountains were only intended to serve as points on which to take observations. Notwithstanding the statement of the native officials that they were perfectly satisfied with my explanation, I could see that their suspicions were not entirely assuaged.

It is worth while traversing a wild country and undergoing the hardships incidental to an explorer's life in order to enjoy the contrast afforded by the comforts of civilisation at the journey's end. The milder climate of Kashgar, coupled with the luxury of a wind-proof house to sleep in, came as a revelation after the hardships I had gone through, and the noise made through the greater part of the night by the clashing of the gongs at the Chinese guard-houses came as a grateful contrast to the solemn silence which reigns on the Pamirs. The Chinese system of government, bad though it is, undoubtedly produces a good effect in countries such as Turkestan, where the inhabitants are easily impressed, and this beating of gongs through the stillness of the night, the braying of trumpets and firing of cannon whenever the Taotai or any other great personage goes outside the city walls, undoubtedly has a great effect on the Kashgarians, reminding them as it does of the fact that their conquerors remain in authority and are always on their guard.

Kashgar is the principal town on the western portion of Chinese Turkestan. It is a city of considerable size, with a floating population varying, according to trade, from 40,000 to 50,000. The city is situated in the midst of a region of sandy desert, intersected here and there by mountain streams, which come down from the Pamirs and Thian Shan, on the banks of which crops are assiduously cultivated, and the green oases thus formed present an appearance in marked contrast to the barren surroundings. The plain of Kashgar is surrounded on three sides by ranges of snow-clad mountains—to the north

THE CITY OF KASHGAR

the Thian Shan, or Celestial range; to the south and west the Mustagh Ata and the forefront of the Pamirs, which rise up like a mighty wall sheer from the dreary plain. To the east the desert stretches for over 2000 miles. The whole of this region is composed of loess, that remarkable geological formation peculiar to Central Asia, which, with its vertical cleavage and sudden crevices, affords so interesting a study to the physicist. This loess stretches over high and low



THE GREAT WALL OF THE OLD CITY OF KASHGAR

ground alike, sometimes to a thickness of over 1000 feet, and the friable earth of its exposed surface becomes pulverised, and permeating the atmosphere covers everything with a layer of dust. The whole atmosphere of the region thus becomes charged with an almost imperceptible fine sand, which tends to give a desolate air to one's surroundings besides causing considerable inconvenience. The patient industry of the Chinese has done much to allay the shortcomings of Nature in this region. Water runs everywhere in artificial channels, along the road, over it and under it, raising green life along

its course where none existed before. Luxuriant orchards teeming with fruit trees, through which run cool shady lanes fringed with poplars, afford a refuge from the sun's heat, and the waving cornfields, each with its owner's home standing within walled enclosures, afford ample testimony to the pains-taking aptitude of the Celestial. The bulk of the people live during the season on fruit, which is so plentiful that for a farthing one can buy a great trayful of peaches, apricots and grapes. Corn is, however, dearer than in India, owing to the limited area of cultivation. Thus may Kashgar be said to be a land of extremes, on the one side desert—a paucity of life and scarcity—on the other green fields and orchards and plenty.

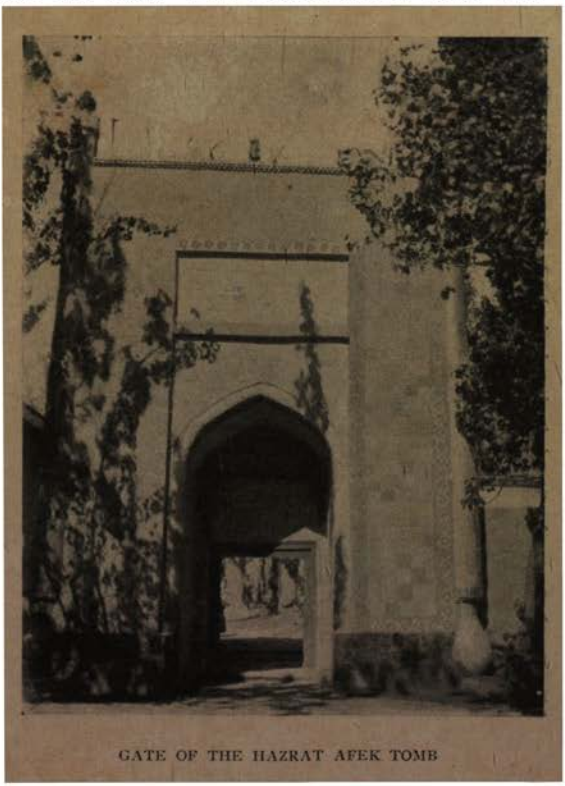
The climate of Kashgar exhibits much the same contrast as that above described. From May till September it is intensely hot, while in the winter months the temperature sinks to zero, these extremes being due to the country's position in the midst of a great continent, and far removed from the tempering influence of the sea. Curiously enough, the people do not share these extremes in their characteristics. They are by nature listless, indifferent, and imperturbable; they can satisfy their wants too easily for it to be worth their while to labour. All that is necessary is to divert the water from one of the channels so as to cause it to flow over a tract of the barren sand, and fruitfulness will come. The mountain ranges shield Kashgar from the keen competition of outside traders, and the great plain is inhabited by races as apathetic as themselves. And so the Kashgarians continue to enjoy a careless existence, indifferent to passing events, and watching revolutions as idle spectators of what is going on in their midst.

It is noteworthy that the various revolutions which have occurred in Kashgar have been almost without exception caused by foreigners. Yakub Beg was a foreigner, as are also the Chinese, and even during the most bloodthirsty struggles the Sarts made no attempt to maintain their independence. The people are, in short, neither rulers nor fighters, they are a race of cultivators and small traders. Destiny has shut them

KASHAR BAZAAR

off from the rest of the world, and nothing will arouse them to aspire to something higher.

Kashgar comprises two cities, the old and the new, the latter being almost entirely monopolised by the Chinese. A distance of five miles separates the two. The houses are of mud with the flat roofs so general in Central Asia, and the aspect monotonous in the extreme. There are no striking buildings with the exception of the Hazrat Afek, a fine tomb outside the old city; the streets are narrow and dirty, and frequently blocked by the camels, donkeys, and ponies attached to the caravans which are constantly entering or departing, and on market days the block becomes so great as to render it practically impossible to work one's way through the crowd, as it stands jammed in the filthy roadway, while it shouts, gesticulates, and haggles over multifarious bargains involving an average expenditure of less than sixpence. There is a considerable trade done between Kashgar and Yarkand, most of it being in the hands of Russian Andijani traders, who as a class are a very decent lot of men, and who are always glad to show their hospitality to travellers, especially to Englishmen. I have on many occasions been entertained

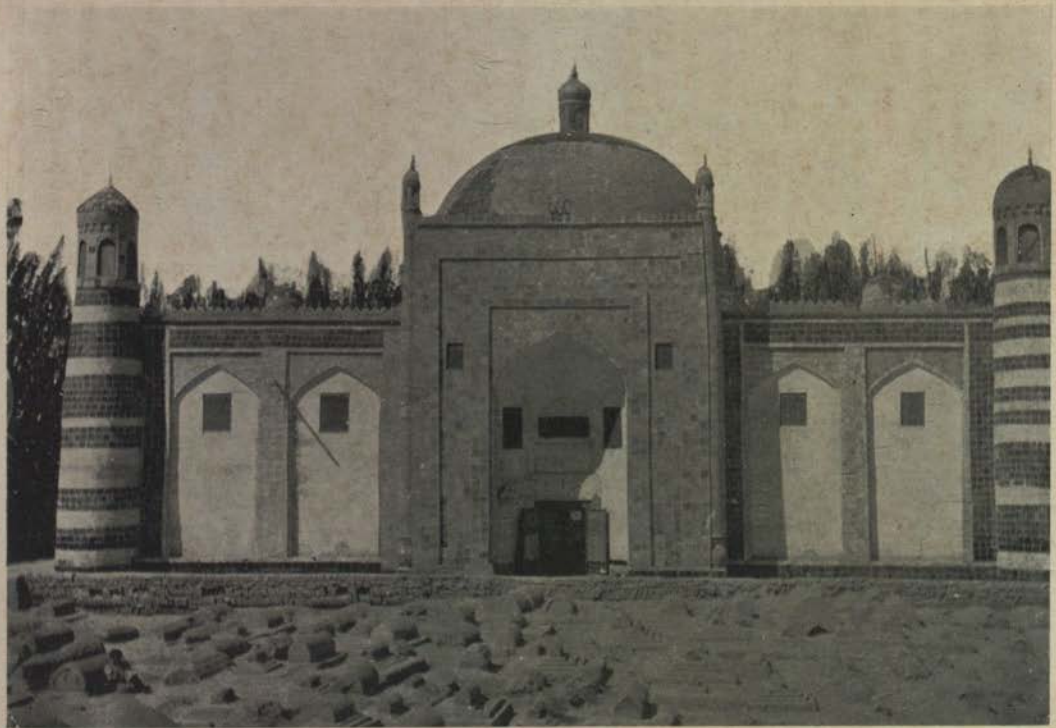


GATE OF THE HAZRAT AFEK TOMB

by these Andijani bagmen, and have enjoyed many an excellent pillau prepared by them for my delectation. Besides being charming hosts, these merchants are excellent company. They are full of fun, and at times are quite childish in their hilarity.

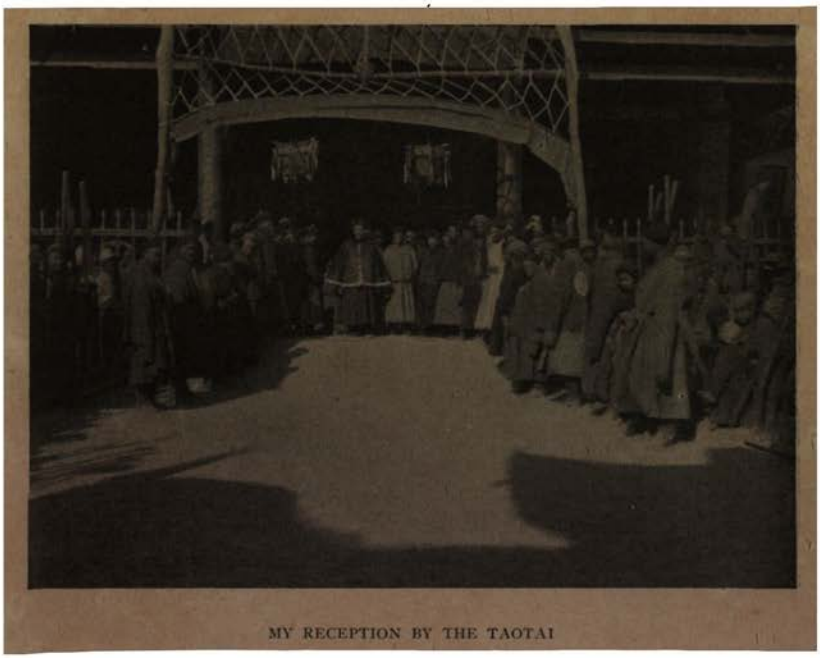
A most important personage in Kashgar is the Taotai, or civil governor, whose jurisdiction extends over the Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan districts. He is also in charge of the mountain tribes of the surrounding country. Under this high official is the Teetai, a species of military governor, and after him comes the Shietai, who is in command of the troops in Kashgar city. Besides these, there are a number of other mandarins, notably Chang, who conducts negotiations with Europeans in Kashgar and spends most of his time in the Russian consulate. The Taotai lives in a customary Chinese dwelling, with spacious courtyards and a pretty garden, in which he cultivates water-lilies, the roots of which he esteems a special delicacy. Visitors of distinction calling on this official are invariably received with the greatest ceremony. When he emerges from the seclusion of his yamen, it is always in great state. Guns are fired, trumpets sounded, and he is carried in a sedan chair surrounded by attendants who ride beside him. He is invariably preceded by a number of sandwich men carrying placards, on which are inscribed the Taotai's numerous titles, and the sight of the governor parading the streets cannot fail to have great moral effect on the spectators.

As soon as my Chinese visiting cards were ready, I paid a ceremonial visit to the Taotai. I arrayed myself in an old blue serge suit, which was the only garment I had at all suitable to the occasion. I have since learnt that the costume best calculated to impress a Chinese official is a long, dark overcoat adorned with big brass buttons. The Taotai received me very courteously, coming to the door of the yamen to bid me welcome. We then passed through a number of doors, arriving at length at the entrance of his reception-room, and here occurred a delay which was almost farcical, as neither of us would be the first to enter. It is Chinese etiquette invariably to assume an air of inferiority, and to pretend that you are



HAZRAT AFEK, THE TOMB OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF KASHGAR

unworthy to precede your neighbour. So when the Taotai bowed to me and pointed towards the entrance, I in turn repeated his pantomime, and after going through this performance many times, I passed it on to another mandarin, and so the performance was prolonged until at last we pushed the Taotai through, and followed him. As soon as we arrived inside the private reception-room, tea and sweets were served, and through the medium of an interpreter we had a lengthy



MY RECEPTION BY THE TAOTAI

conversation, during which the governor evinced considerable interest in my journey, and begged me to bring him on my return journey some of the entrails of a tiger, to be used for medicinal purposes,* and some bears' feet, which he considered the choicest of all table delicacies. I noticed while talking to the Taotai that he was very gorgeously attired, wearing a flowing garment of blue silk beneath his handsome sable coat and tight-fitting trousers of quilted yellow silk.

The Taotai subsequently paid me a return visit, when his

* Notably to wind round pregnant women to assist them in childbirth.

ideas of European civilisation struck me as being exceedingly entertaining. He allowed that we were very clever at mechanical invention, and instanced the steam-engine and the photographic camera as achievements of which we might be justly proud. He informed me, however, that he pitied us for our lack of that lofty dignity of mind inherent in the Celestial race, which rendered it superior to the petty quarrels of nations, and enabled them to regard with equanimity the affairs of the outside world without any desire to take a part in it. The governor's knowledge of the region under his charge was, I discovered, extremely limited, and I was amused at being asked to draw a map showing the boundaries fixed by the recent Pamir Commission, so that he could understand what still remained to China.

On paying a subsequent visit to the Shietai, I asked permission to visit the barracks of the Lanzar or regiment stationed in Kashgar. The necessary authority was at once accorded, and I went over the barracks and found them extremely comfortable, the men appearing well looked after and contented. Their armament I found to be miscellaneous, but among others I noted many excellent weapons of recent pattern, and a few magazine rifles. These were, however, all kept in a shocking state, apparently never cleaned, and corroded with dust and dirt. Military discipline as understood by us appeared to be non-existent. The Shietai officers and men formed a species of happy family party, and so long as the chief was not worried he was content to leave the others to themselves and refrain from fatiguing them with unnecessary parades. Occasionally the troops go out for rifle practice, but as there is nothing in the nature of a range available, they stick up a mark in a field, and trust to the people keeping out of the line of fire. One day they took out an old cannon just to show what they could do. Such matters as range and elevation did not trouble them. They pointed the gun at a mark a few yards away, and having filled the muzzle three-quarters full of powder, applied the match and chanced it. The result was an unexpected surprise. The ball carried over the target, and continued its career until it landed on a farmer's

house, which it demolished destroying a number of his cattle at the same time. Fortunately for himself, the farmer was absent with his family at the time, and the Chinese thought it a great joke when the poor Sart applied for compensation, a demand which they esteemed too funny to be entertained for a moment. One day I attended by invitation at a grand review, which proved a very entertaining spectacle. The general inspected the troops from a tent, in which he sat drinking tea and smoking his pipe, while the men fired ragged volleys at intervals, chattering the while, and laying down their weapons occasionally in order to relight their pipes.

CHINESE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND STAFF

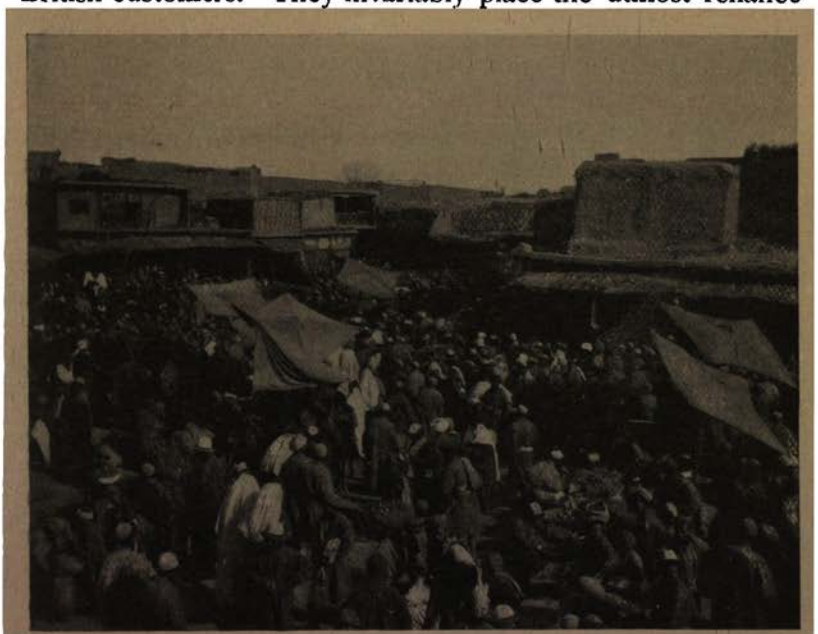
Kashgar is a place of meeting for all the nationalities of Asia, and while there I had opportunities of studying a great number of types. Of those I met I preferred the Afghans, who, though proud and possessed of a good deal of swagger, are a fine race, who never lose their respect for themselves or for the Englishmen with whom they come in contact. In all my intercourse with the natives of India I have been struck by the fact that the regard they evince towards an Englishman whom they may encounter far away from their own country, is not due to self-interest so much as to a genuine feeling of kinship to their rulers; and I have been very much impressed by this fact in Central Asia. It is curious to note the influence which a residence in Turkestan has upon the foreigner; the various traders who come to Kashgar from the four points of the compass acquire, after a continued residence, similar characteristics to those of the natives. They become listless and apathetic. Here the fanatical Pathan becomes as mild as the Bokhariot, and in place of his former fierceness develops intelligence and good manners, and takes a keen interest in political questions. The centre of attraction in

Turkestan is Abdurrahman, Amir of Afghanistan, who to-day dominates the situation; and the speculation as to what will happen when he dies is very great. Nor could I arrive at any general consensus of opinion on this subject. Some hold that one of the Amir's sons will succeed him, others hold that Afghanistan will cease to exist as an independent State, and that the British and the Russian frontiers will meet on the Hindu Koosh. To the traders the problems involved in these questions are of a special interest. If the Amir is succeeded in accordance with the wishes he has himself expressed, then will Afghanistan remain a closed market, so great are the duties levied and the difficulties under which trade is carried on. If Afghanistan ceases to exist roads will be constructed, railways will probably be built, and trade is sure to increase. Thus the Asiatic question, and more especially the relative strength and intentions of the nations whose interests are so highly involved, is constantly being discussed in the bazaars, where Russia is invariably regarded as the greater Power, inasmuch as her methods of conquest have left a far greater impression on the native mind than have ours. The number of Russians in Central Asia is small, but in proportion to the native population it is greatly in excess of the number of Britishers in India. And it must be borne in mind that when Russia strikes she strikes heavily, and she never goes back. And again, in all her Central Asian conquests, Russia has never encountered a strong and warlike people, and she has rarely met with a reverse, for which reasons her prestige stands high.

In our own case, supposing, for the sake of argument, that our retirement from Afghanistan in 1881 was prudent, there is no doubt whatever that our prestige and the appreciation of the native intelligence has suffered in consequence. The opinion current to this day in Central Asia is that we were not strong enough to hold the country we had conquered, and this prompts one to ask whether financial considerations should be allowed to outweigh the moral effect which it is so necessary to maintain. The Central Asian traders who have dealings with India have disseminated accounts of the justice

and fair dealing of the British towards the natives; but I question whether they do not, as a matter of fact, prefer the harsher but speedier methods of Russian justice.

It would, according to my experience, be difficult to exaggerate the confidence with which Indian traders regard their British customers. They invariably place the utmost reliance



BAZAAR IN KASHGAR

on the word of a Sahib, and I had many opportunities of noting the implicit trust with which the promise of an Englishman is regarded. A case in point occurred just before my starting from Kashgar. I had mislaid my cheque-book on an Indian firm of bankers, and requiring a considerable sum of money was rather at a loss what to do. Kallick had seen another cheque-book in my bag which he thought was the one I sought, but this contained cheques on a London bank unknown in this part of the world. Notwithstanding this, a native trader (a Peshawari) took my cheque on London, which was, of course, drawn in pounds, shillings and pence, values

with which he was unacquainted; and, after accepting my calculation of the equivalent sum in rupees, he gave me the full value in Chinese tungas. It would be difficult to find a more remarkable instance of the estimate in which the Englishman's reputation is held in Central Asia. The man in question had never seen me before, had no means of finding out whether I possessed a banking account either in India or in England, and yet he trusted me implicitly.

A few days after my arrival in Kashgar I paid a visit to M. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul-General, who received me most kindly and invited me to stay to dinner, which, in accordance with the Russian custom, he took in the middle of the day, and at which we drank some excellent Turkestan wine, both white and red. After dinner I inspected the barracks where the Cossack escort was quartered, which struck me as being in every respect well adapted for its purpose. The men were well set-up, hardy, and active. They were, of course, born horsemen, and gave one the impression of being ready to go anywhere at a moment's notice. This was the first of many pleasant visits I paid to M. Petrovsky, whom I found to be one of the best informed men I had ever met; and I was greatly struck by his up-to-dateness in every subject which cropped up, either political or scientific. I was especially interested in his criticisms on our methods of dealing with the natives under our rule, and was struck by the insistent manner in which he refused to believe that they felt any affection for their rulers. He pointed out that we English are too cold and haughty, and hold ourselves too far aloof from our inferiors to gain their good will. He also ridiculed the freedom with which the Indian Government permitted irresponsible globe-trotting M.P.s to spend the cold weather in India haranguing native audiences, and asking them if they were happy under British rule. Such a question, he affirmed, put to a Russian native subject in Turkestan would mean a serious risk of the interrogator being sent to Siberia for life. He also dilated on the shortsightedness of the British Government in permitting the publication of MacGregor's book on the Russian advance towards India, and asked me how it was that a staff

officer had been permitted to make public the secret dispositions of the British forces in case of war. The book, he added, had been read by the Russian officials, and had created a great sensation. Of Captain Younghusband's mission a few years previously the Consul-General had much to say, and he ridiculed the policy of the Indian Government in sending an explorer, "ignorant of the Chinese language and unacquainted with the duplicity of the Chinese character," to conduct a political mission as delicate as that involved in a settlement of the Pamirs question. And he told me that all the while that Captain Younghusband was interviewing the Taotai and urging him to despatch troops to the Pamirs, to complete an effective occupation in anticipation of a Russian advance, the Taotai was keeping Petrovsky daily informed of the purport of Younghusband's proposals, acting on which the Russian agent took steps to render the Russian occupation effective before the Chinese troops were half-way to the Pamirs. Petrovsky related this fact with evident relish, and he expressed himself as being greatly amused at the fact that the Indian Government had decorated the explorer in recognition of his political services.

The Tirah Expedition also afforded us much food for conversation. Petrovsky told me that he had taken in an English paper throughout the campaign in order to get full details, and he adverted strongly on some of the action taken by the British Government in dealing with the Pathan. In his opinion the only satisfactory method to have adopted would have been to say to the general selected to command the expedition: "Take what troops you require, settle these troublesome people in the quickest manner possible. You have *carte blanche*, now go and do it." Instead of which the officer in charge was hampered in every way by orders from London and from Simla emanating from people the majority of whom had never been near the scene of operations, and who possessed no personal knowledge of the *status quo*. It was a first principle of the Russian administrative method to trust the general in command of an expedition implicitly. He would not be hampered in any way. If he succeeded, he would be rewarded; if he failed, his career would be closed. In the result a successful issue was assured

from the outset; the desired end was attained in the shortest possible time. The loss of life involved was greatly lessened by the brevity of the campaign, and the cost would probably be one-half that involved by the British method.

I could not help agreeing with a great deal of the reasoning put forward by Petrovsky, and am convinced that the only method of satisfactorily dealing with Pathans is to employ means to which they have always been accustomed, and which they therefore readily understand. These people understand only the weight of the sword, and by it they must be ruled. The half-hearted methods of Western civilisation are wasted on them. The spectacle of a well-equipped British division sitting idle week after week, and extending the term of grace agreed upon while it waits for a tribe to come in and make its submission, does not commend itself to such people. Asiatics cannot understand such a policy; it is Asiatics with whom we have to deal. It is not the general who is to blame, nor his officers or men; they are good enough. It is the system founded on ignorance and stultified by the conceit and red tape of the authorities at home which is responsible for the muddle which periodically ensues.

I was greatly surprised by the intimate knowledge Petrovsky evinced of Indian politics and administration, and I discovered that he neglected no means of keeping himself posted on the subject. He showed me on the shelves of his library all the latest blue-books relating to India and Central Asia, and I found that he had known Abdurrahman intimately while the present Amir was a refugee at Samarcand. On matters connected with Central Asia he was, of course, *au fait*, and, like all Russians, talked on the subject freely.

One day I had an interesting opportunity of seeing how the Russian conquerors treat their subject races. I happened to be at the Consulate when an Andijani merchant called on some business, and was promptly invited to enter. He was treated as an honoured guest; the Russian officers chatted with him on terms of intimacy, and to watch him seated in the Consul's private room as he partook of tea and fruit one would have supposed him to be a cherished friend. The follow-

ing morning I observed the same merchant making a hurried exit through the Consulate gates, his progress being skilfully accelerated by the whips of the Cossacks. From inquiries I gathered that the merchant had done something of which the Consul-General did not approve, or had failed to do something which Petrovsky wished him to do. The real cause is immaterial, but the incident came opportunely as an example of the Russian method. After this I began to appreciate how it is that the natives entertain such a wholesome respect for the Russians. It is, however, only fair to state that so long as they do as they are told they have little cause for complaining of their treatment.

Of the Chinese Petrovsky has the greatest contempt. He characterises them as being effete and corrupt, and claims that it is impossible to permit such a nation to continue as a ruling Power much longer; he instanced the fact that the Taotai was entirely in his hands, and had to do exactly as he wished him. In the event of the mandarin proving recalcitrant he had it in his power to make it unpleasant for him. He told me that on one occasion in the previous year the Taotai had remained obdurate on a small point which it was deemed essential he should abandon; and as the Chinaman refused to listen to reason, he had arranged with another mandarin, who was a mutual friend, to bring the great man to take a Russian vapour bath at the Consulate. While enjoying his ablutions he was to be seized and artistically whipped by four stalwart Cossacks. "Fortunately," added the Consul-General, "the Taotai became convinced by the force of the argument and gave way, so that extreme measures became on this occasion unnecessary."

My visits to Petrovsky were most interesting, and made the time pass all too quickly; but though I made a point of calling at the Consulate nearly every day, he was not the only interesting acquaintance I made in Kashgar. I found a great friend in Father Hendriks, a Dutch missionary who had spent a most adventurous life, and had traversed the greater portion of Asia. He had spent twenty years in China, and had lived in Mongolia and Siberia before visiting Kashgar, where he had passed many years doing uphill work in the cause of religion in face

of innumerable obstacles and with little tangible result. He was, however, always cheerful and full of hope, and the kind-heartedness and enthusiasm which marked his relations with the Chinese and the Sarts caused him to be on the best possible terms with both. His intimate knowledge of medicine was the means of curing many a sufferer and of saving much life ; but the Russians disliked him, and he had suffered much at their hands under suspicion of his being a Jesuit. Father Hendriks had studied a great deal and was a wonderful linguist, speaking most European and Asiatic languages. He was equally expert in astronomy and geology, and was well acquainted with the geological formation of the Pamirs. I had many interesting walks with him in and around Kashgar, in course of which we explored the recesses of the bazaar, and he showed me where best to purchase silks from China, carpets from Khotan and Bokhara, astrakhan from Mongolia, and snow-leopard, otter- and fox-skins from Siberia. Outside the city we had some very successful duck-shooting expeditions, and one afternoon, in company with Mr. Hochberg, a Swedish missionary, we went, equipped with picks, to visit some old mounds in the plain, and succeeded in unearthing some curious pieces of pottery together with a few coins and broken images.

About two miles outside the walls of Kashgar there is a fine tomb, known as the Hazret Afek. In former times it was the custom for the Kashgarians to send every year the fairest girl of the land to the Emperor of China. One damsel, pining for the land of her birth, begged to be allowed to return to Kashgar. The Emperor granted her request and gave her at parting a box of sweets, which he enjoined her not to open until she arrived in Kashgar. On entering the city she opened the box and ate some of its contents and expired immediately. The sweets had been poisoned, and thus was the girl punished for her temerity in desiring to leave her celestial lord. According to the Chinese legend, the cart in which she travelled back from China lies with the girl inside the tomb.

December 18 being the birthday of his Imperial Majesty the Tsar of all the Russias, was observed as a *fête* day at the Consulate, and I paid a morning visit to Petrovsky to offer my

felicitations. He appeared much gratified, and asked me if I would care to have an *appêl* sounded, and see if the Cossacks would justify their reputation for smartness in answering the summons. I at once closed with the offer, and was surprised at the celerity displayed. Within seven minutes by my watch fifty men reined up before us in the saddle all fully equipped, and, having saluted, they trotted off down the sandy plain facing the Consulate, and there went through a variety of evolutions very interesting to watch. The sturdy ponies they rode appeared trained to perfection; they stopped dead at a word from their riders, and at another would lie down and afford him shelter while he fired over the saddle. The men also proved themselves extremely agile; they would dismount and act as skirmishers, whilst a dozen men held the ponies in their rear, and the feats they performed while mounted were a sight to see. The display ended with a grand assault on the Consulate, the Cossacks swimming their horses across the river, and then, having dismounted, storming the position sword in hand. It was exceedingly well done, and the men are, as a body, perhaps the best light cavalry, or, more correctly speaking, mounted infantry in the world.

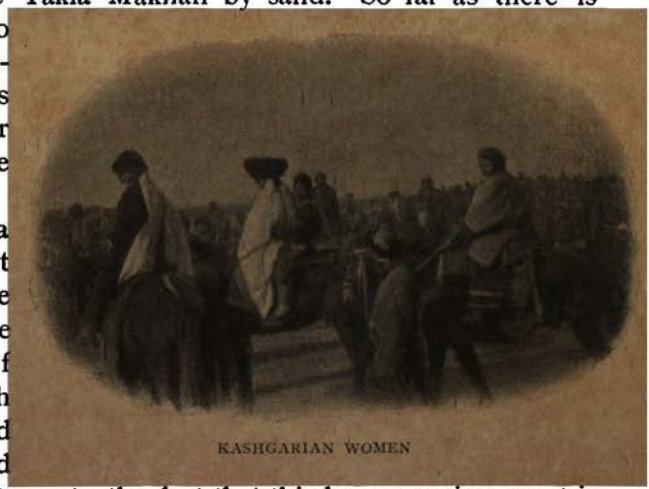
STREET SCENE IN KASHGAR

One day a man arrived from Khotan, bringing with him some pieces of mulberry or birch-bark on which were inscribed a number of characters in some unknown language. I examined them with great interest, and inquired as to how they had fallen into his hands. He stated that he had been away in the desert of Takla Makhan, near Aksipel, to collect bhourtsa,

a species of dried lavender, when he suddenly came upon a small sunken wall. His curiosity being aroused, he had dismounted from his camel and dug in the sand with his stick. After some labour he managed to bare the wall to some depth, and eventually came upon an opening, through which he crept until he missed his footing and fell into a sunken room; as soon as he had recovered himself he perceived in the dim light two figures sitting on stools. Their features were all shrivelled up, and on touching them they immediately fell to pieces. In a corner of the room were a number of garments in an advanced state of decay. In one corner was a box, on opening which my informant discovered a skeleton, under the skull of which, wrapped in a cloth, were the documents he brought me. I give this story as I heard it, but cannot, of course, vouch for its truth; it is, however, an undoubted fact that large numbers of similar manuscripts have, during the last few years, been unearthed in Chinese Turkestan. The first recovered fell into the hands of Major Bower, and Mr. Macartney has at different times acquired a considerable number, all of which are now in the possession of the Indian Government, who have quite recently placed them in charge of an expert in the hopes that he may be able to decipher them. A number of these block prints have been the subject of an elaborate investigation by Dr. Rudolf Hoernle, who has, however, up to the present, met with little success. Of the total number which he has examined, he has been able to diagnose the writing in only two, which he has pronounced to be in the Pehlavi character, at one time the language of the ancient Persians. The true character of the script on the remainder is still a mystery. Both Sanscrit and Mongolian characters occasionally appear, and some of the manuscripts are said to be written on paper. But though it is known that the Chinese were acquainted with the art of paper-making 2000 years ago, and it is safe to assume that the documents are of Chinese origin, the meaning of the inscriptions remain a mystery. Nor can the language in which they are traced be defined. It might be suggested that the puzzle is to be accounted for by the fact that the people of Chinese

TRADE IN KASHGAR

Turkestan gradually changed their language as they came into contact with the Sanscrit tongues of India, just as did the Mongols, who gradually evolved a new alphabet after their descent on Western Asia; and in default of a better theory I am inclined to adopt this explanation rather than put credence in the rumoured obliteration of the ancient cities at one time existing in the Takla Makhan by sand. So far as there is evidence to go upon, the earliest manuscripts to hand appear to date from the sixth century.



KASHGARIAN WOMEN

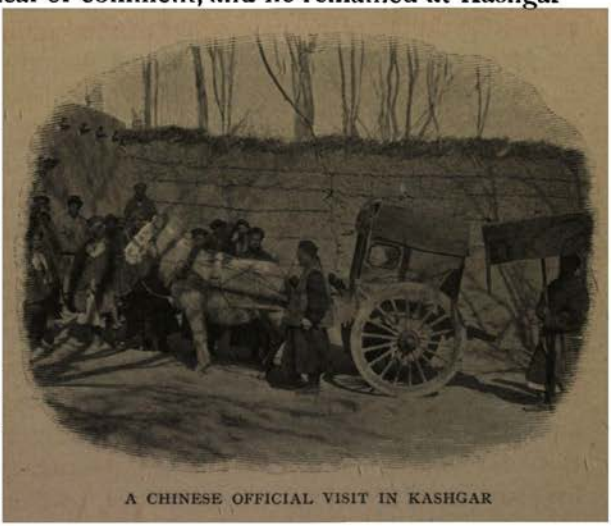
The Takla Makhan desert derives its name from the large quantities of pottery which are scattered over it, and which bear witness to the fact that this barren region must in ancient times have been the location of an advanced civilisation. The natives of Kashgaria claim that in ancient times the Takla Makhan was a fertile and cultivated country. They hold a tradition that before the introduction of Mahommedanism about the end of the tenth century no fewer than forty-one cities flourished in this region under the rule of a certain Zewar Shah, King of Katak; and that by reason of the disbelief of the inhabitants in the religion of the prophet which three Imams from Bokhara had come to preach, their country was suddenly and miraculously destroyed by a sand storm. The natives still believe that the antiquities so constantly found in this desert belong to the cities which once formed part of the kingdom of Zewar Shah. To the east and south of Kashgar and Khotan are deserts which consist of little else but sand heaps, impenetrable jungle and salt deserts. In ancient times there were large towns in these wastes, of which the names of two only

have come down to us. We know of Lot and of Katak, but of the rest all traces lie buried in the sands. Hunters who enter the desert in quest of wild animals, sometimes relate how they have chanced upon the foundations of cities, and stories of the ruins of noble buildings and castles, of minarets, and of mosques have come to hand, but when the travellers have returned to conduct others to the scene of these discoveries, no trace of them remained, for the sand had always buried the ruins as it swept across the desert at the bidding of the wind.

Most of the antiquities referred to, including pottery, coins, manuscripts, block printed books, and miscellaneous articles, have come from Khotan, and fifteen different sites situated at distances varying from three to 150 miles distant from Khotan are now known, though only two of them, named Borazan and Ag Sipel, have been verified by European travellers. For the remainder we have only the word of the native treasure-seekers, chief of whom appears to be one Islam Achun of Khotan. In Borazan have been discovered gold ornaments, beads, precious stones, including diamonds and terra-cotta images. A number of villagers are here constantly engaged in digging into the side of the loess cliff. According to local tradition Borazan was a great city with forty gates, which was conquered by Rustam, who burnt it. Ag Sipel, to-day an uninhabited place in the middle of the desert, lies twenty miles north-east of Khotan. The houses have disappeared, but the roads are plainly discernible, and the whole of the site is strewn with fragments of pottery, while many manuscripts have been recovered from beside the skulls found within coffins which have been exhumed.

During my stay at Kashgar an envoy arrived from Hunza to seek the Taotai's permission for the people to cultivate some untenanted land in the Raskam Valley at the entrance to the Shimshal Pass. The amount of land available for cultivation in Kunjut is very limited, and the action of the British Government in checking the raiding propensities of the people has resulted in a considerable increase in the population. The envoy stated that an outlet was absolutely required for the employment of over a hundred families, and as the land asked

for was of no use to any one else, the envoy besought a favourable reply to his application. The Chinese were, however, very suspicious, imagining that the British Government was making use of the Kunjutis for political reasons, so as to obtain a footing on the northern side of the Hindu Kush and along the Mustagh range. I found reason to believe that Petrovsky was under the same impression. The arrival of the Kunjut envoy appeared to excite a good deal of comment, and he remained at Kashgar when I left a few days later, though I believe that his request was subsequently granted by the Chinese, notwithstanding the Consul-General's advice to the contrary.



A CHINESE OFFICIAL VISIT IN KASHGAR

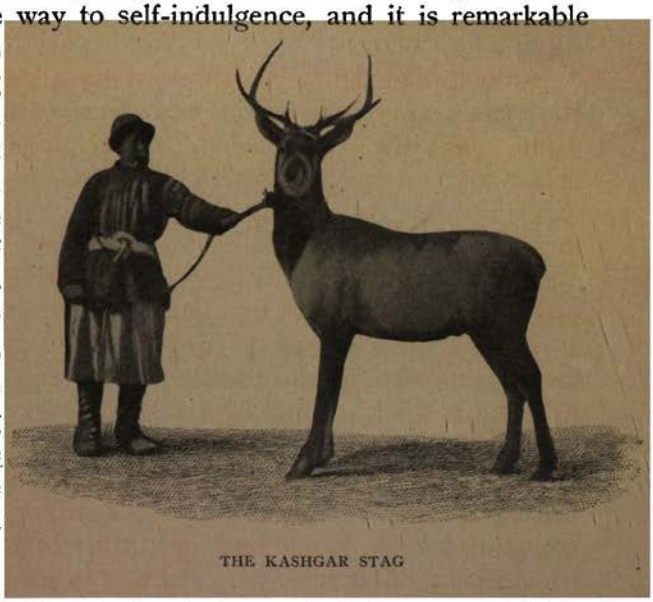
On Christmas Day we entertained Petrovsky and his officers. The occasion was a great success, and the plum pudding made by my man Kallick was pronounced excellent, its qualities being enhanced by the flaming brandy in which it was enveloped. We sat a good while at table and pledged one another as though our acquaintance was one of years' standing, and Petrovsky drew pictures of sporting excursions which by their attractiveness sufficed to remind me that my stay must be curtailed and that I must get to the road again. From the roof of Macartney's house far away towards the north, one could clearly discern the snow-clad barrier of the Thian Shan. I had many times gazed in this direction, and I now realised that I must move on and make for the other side. I accordingly consulted Petrovsky, who gave me a deal of valuable information about the roads traversing the mountains, and furnished me with passports and letters of introduction to friends of his

own at Vierny, the capital of the province of Semiritche. I anticipated from the Consul-General's conversation that I had a good chance of obtaining some fair sport in this province, and learnt that when in the Thian Shan I might look for wapiti, wild sheep, goats and bears, while on the steppes bordering the Sir Daria beyond and in the neighbourhood of Lake Balkash, I might chance on a sight of the Central Asian tiger.

Among the things which must have struck me most in Kashgar were the marriage customs and the status of the women generally. The Kashgarians are, upon the whole, a very decent lot, and for an Eastern people are by no means brutal to their women folk; but their moral scruples are few, and their marriage customs according to Western ideas at least curious. When a traveller or a trader arrives in Kashgar he engages a go-between to find him a wife possessed of an allowance of youth and beauty commensurate to his means; for these qualifications are quite as marketable commodities in Kashgar as in London. The preliminaries being concluded the pair are solemnly united according to Mahommedan law before the Mullah; but at the same time that the marriage takes place a divorce contract is signed, in which a sum is named to be paid by the husband to his bride in the event of his deciding to dismiss her. In due course this eventuality generally occurs, and the lady returns to her relations until she finds another suitor and is married again. A girl at the Russian Consulate, who assisted her mother in the laundry, and was only sixteen years of age, informed me that she had been married twelve times. And yet there are Kashgarian women who cannot obtain husbands, and in order to increase the chances of these, there is at a point just opposite the window of the room I occupied a praying place specially set apart for the use of widows and spinsters one day a week. And here they used to congregage and cry and lament, and pray Allah to send them husbands, and raise such a hullabaloo with their weeping and wailing that one could hear it for miles.

Taken as a whole, Chinese Turkestan is an interesting place to visit but a dreary one to remain in. The atmosphere is

murky and so full of invisible dust, that, notwithstanding the cloudless condition of the sky, the sun is rarely visible. The fine dust and sand thus borne in suspense leaves its mark not only on the mountains, where it becomes deposited in layers, but also on the people, who become under its influence heavy and unintelligent; by degrees new-comers develop indolent habits and give way to self-indulgence, and it is remarkable that religion is the only thing which will tempt them out of their languor. A very large proportion of the Kashgarians make their pilgrimage to Mecca, whole families braving the terrible passes of the Karakoram and cross India before taking boat *en route* for the Prophet's shrine, and that so apathetic a people should endure such hardships is a remarkable instance of the stirring influence of religion.*

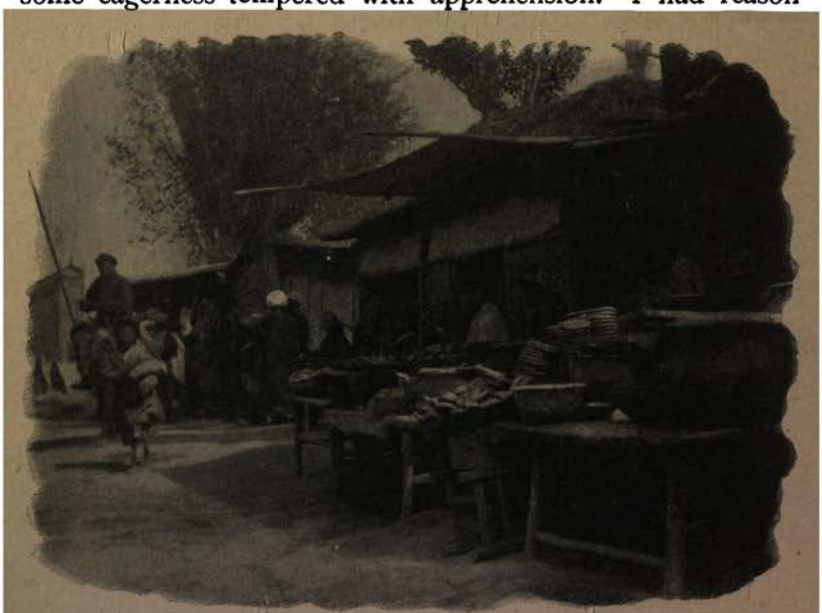


THE KASHGAR STAG

My preparations for departure were soon completed. A sufficient number of Russian rouble notes were purchased in the bazaar, supplies laid in, my wardrobe overhauled, and an arrangement was concluded with a Kashgari to hire me a small caravan of ponies to go as far as Narin, the nearest Russian frontier post in the Thian Shan. From this point I learnt that the road would admit of sledges being used; and these I

* The opening of the Central Asiatic Railway to Andijan, has afforded a more direct route to the shrine of the Prophet, and increasing numbers of pilgrims cross Turkestan by this means every year, taking train to Askabad, whence they find their way across Persia by caravan.

was given to understand would be arranged for by the officer in charge, to whom Petrovsky kindly gave me a letter of introduction. The day before my departure the Taotai invited me to dinner, and as this was to be the first Chinese meal I had ever eaten I looked forward to the event with some eagerness tempered with apprehension. I had reason



A KASHGARIAN BAKER'S SHOP

to believe that my gastronomic powers would be heavily taxed and my expectations were fully justified by the event.

The hour fixed was three in the afternoon, and we sat down eight. The ceremonial observed interested me greatly. Before assigning each guest his place, the Taotai lifted a cup and saucer to his head and then elevated the chopsticks in the same way. Having felt each guest's chair to see if it was strong enough to support him, our host motioned us to our places and we sat down. Everything was stewed except the duck, which was fried. The various courses were served in China bowls suspended by their rims over vessels of boiling water,

the same with the wines, altogether an excellent idea in cold weather. As I was the chief guest every one vied with his neighbours in paying me attention and helping me to the titbits out of their own basins. The effect was a trifle grotesque, but the cooking was extremely good, and the room maintained at an agreeable temperature by a brazier of charcoal placed under the table. I append the menu.

MENU.

HORS D'ŒUVRES.

Ham.	Pork.
Tongue.	Ducks' eggs preserved in chalk.
Pork liver.	Sweet meats.

All the above were cut in squares and arranged in heaps round the table.

RÉLÉVÈS.

Shark's fins.	Sea slug.
Sweet onions.	Lotus beans.
Bamboo shoots.	Crackling of sucking pig.
Fish-skins and onions.	Celery balls and meat.
Mushrooms.	Duck fried in butter.
Meat dumplings.	Rice and sweets.
Lotus roots.	Liver of sucking pig.
Sweet dumplings.	Bamboo roots.

WINES.

Hot elderberry wine
Hot liqueur (like Benedictine).

TEA.

ALMONDS.

I retired as soon as possible after dinner, and having passed a restless night I rose and paid a parting visit to the Consulate, where I paid my passport fees and learnt that Petrovsky had very kindly made arrangements to forward the trophies of *Ovis*

Poli I obtained on the Pamir direct to Batoum, and I had the gratification of seeing them start in charge of an Andijani. I then bade farewell with much regret to the Consul-General, who had been most civil and hospitable to me during my stay. I am at a loss to this day to account for the misunderstanding between Petrovsky and Captain Younghusband which the latter chronicles in his admirable volume.* Petrovsky, as I guage him,

THE TAOTAI'S DINNER PARTY

is certainly not the man to quarrel with an acquaintance on the score of an unintentional breach of etiquette, and the explanation given by the Consul-General, that the reason he had taken offence was because his visitor had paid a formal call in the afternoon instead of in the morning, must be regarded as a pretext for concealing the real cause of the ill-feeling whatever it may have been. During my stay at Kashgar Petrovsky had been exceptionally candid with me even for a Russian officer, and he had afforded me a large amount of information on trade and other matters of the greatest interest which I have embodied

* "The Heart of a Continent," p. 320.

in another chapter. And so I started from Kashgar to resume my journey on January 6, reinforced by a fresh acquisition in the shape of a small Kashgarian Chow dog which I had purchased in the bazaar, which, though savage at first, eventually became my inseparable companion, and after surviving many hardships returned with me eventually to India in the best of health.

CHAPTER IV

FROM KASHGAR TO VIERNY

Are not the mountains, plains and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them ?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion ?

BYRON.

KAZAKS OF THE THIAN SHAN—SUMMER

CHAPTER IV

FROM KASHGAR TO VIERNY

Departure from Kashgar—Trouble at the Chinese Customs—A Chinese Legend—Chakmak—Kizil Kurgan—Over the Turgat Pass—Akbashi—The Russian Frontier—M. Sozontoff—His Work and Pay—Russian Methods in Central Asia—Kirghiz Obligations—Smuggling on the Frontier—Naryn—On-Archa—Kutumaldi—Jilarik—Osunagach—Vierny.

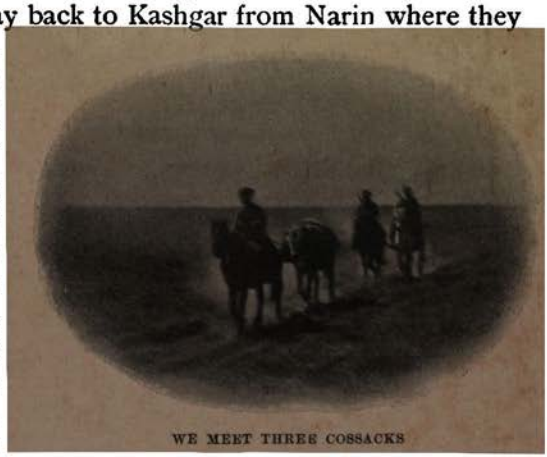
I LEFT Kashgar with a considerably reduced caravan, taking with me only such baggage as I was likely to require on my journey. Six ponies sufficed for my requirements, and a couple of riding beasts completed my equipment. Kallick and Tilai Bai, who were both weary of the delights of Kashgar, appeared quite eager to return into the wilds, and neither exhibited the least reluctance to leave the wife he had married soon after our arrival. When I drew their attention to the hardheartedness of their conduct they merely laughed, and said they could easily find other wives when they returned. I watched the cavalcade move off with Spot and my new acquisition whose name was represented by the Chinese monosyllable "Qua" which they told me meant "rose." Then I said good-bye to Macartney and rode down to the Russian Consulate to take my farewell of Petrovsky. Before

parting he took me to the barracks of the Cossack escort where I found the men paraded in the yard in full dress. A portion of their soup and pillau, with a bottle of vodka and clean glasses, had been placed on a table for the use of the officers. We all drank their health, which they acknowledged with hoarse shouts, and then I said good-bye and rode on through narrow lanes and by the walled enclosures of the suburbs until I at length emerged on the

FIRST CAMP LEAVING KASHGAR FOR VIERNY

broad dusty road leading to the desert. On one side stood the Chinese custom-house adorned with many banners carrying strange devices. There was a Sart on guard who rushed up and said that I must stop till the clerk had supervised my papers. I thought it quite unnecessary that my passport should be examined when leaving Kashgar, and told the man so, but without result, and after some delay I was ushered into the clerk's room. Here my passport was examined and returned to me, and after I had been regaled with a cup of tea I was permitted to depart. I hastened on, desirous of catching up the ponies, and was much annoyed to discover a messenger riding after me in hot pursuit. The man rode up in a cloud of dust and said

that the Chinese clerk wanted to see my papers again and that I must return. I promptly refused to do anything of the sort, and told him that if his master required a reference as to who I was he had better apply to the Taotai who was my intimate friend. Then we rode on until we entered a dreary stretch of sand reaching upwards until it attained the summit of a low range of hills from which it sunk to the frozen bed of a river. By the side of this rose a sandstone cliff, high up in the face of which were three caves evidently made by the hand of man, though how any one ever reached such a position was more than I could understand. The guide told me that in olden times these caves had been the country residence of the wife of a Chinese mandarin in Kashgar who was so lovely that her husband was jealous of any one setting eyes on her. He therefore placed her in these caves which were hollowed out from the top. Food was let down by a rope, and when her husband visited her he entered her abode in the same way. After crossing the river we met three Cossacks on their way back to Kashgar from Narin where they had taken the post. They were hardy looking men and seemed fit for any duty in their long grey military coats and fur capes, with ear-pieces let down to keep out the wind. We also met long strings of camels and ponies laden with brushwood to be burnt in Kashgar. These caravans were in charge of Kirghiz of a different type to those I had met on the Pamirs. They were not nearly so Mongolian in appearance, and their features were far more regular than those I had hitherto met.



WE MEET THREE COSSACKS

Shortly afterwards we left the desert behind us and reached the outskirts of the flourishing village of Artish, a fair type of the hamlets of Chinese Turkestan. Here I caught up my ponies, and the Kashgari in charge arranged with the Beg of the village to place his house at my disposal. My quarters were most comfortable, the floor was covered with rugs, a roaring fire was burning in the grate and the whole surroundings snug and homelike. The temperature at night was extremely cold, no less than 26° of frost being registered, but the morning was bright and sunny and the lower spurs of the Thian Shan made a fantastic outline in the distance. This remarkable range of mountains can be clearly seen from this point, and although not so stupendous as the Hindu Kush it affords a panorama truly magnificent. These mountains extend over a distance of some 1500 miles running practically due east and west, and the average width covered by their spurs is 250 miles.

The road follows the course of a river for a considerable distance, and a constant fording of its many bends was rendered difficult by the fact that its surface was so thinly frozen as to cause the animals to take a number of involuntary duckings which considerably disarranged the adjustment of their loads and entailed much labour and delay. Later we passed some curious hills which were literally honeycombed with little nullahs like holes in a sponge and came to an old fort named Tashik Tash, the wall of which extended for some miles on either side right up to the mountain slope with the object of compelling the traveller to pass through the main gate. There were a few insignificant Chinese soldiers in the place who did not attempt to interfere with us. We rested awhile and had some tea, to which we entertained the Sarts, who appeared attached to the place and were especially impressed by my saccharine tabloids. It was during this halt that I discovered what a woeful lot of beasts my ponies were, most of them were worn-out and three were dead lame. There was, however, nothing to be done, and we resumed our journey in

LAKE IN THIAN SHAN MOUNTAINS

the afternoon. Towards evening we came on a Kirghiz encampment and I felt as if I were among friends again. One can't help liking these nomads—they are a very decent lot, and, I believe, prefer Englishmen to other nationalities. They had a number of large black dogs with them who seemed rather fierce, but their akois were just the same as those I had seen on the Pamirs. We arrived in a somewhat forlorn condition, many of the ponies being lame, and others had sore backs. There had, moreover, been so many tumbles that the loads required readjustment. The hospitable Kirghiz got an akoi ready for me and did all they could to make me comfortable. I devoted the evening to taking a lesson in Turki from Kallick, but he proved a very bad instructor, and was probably not particularly anxious that I should learn too much lest the profit he made out of me should be cut down.

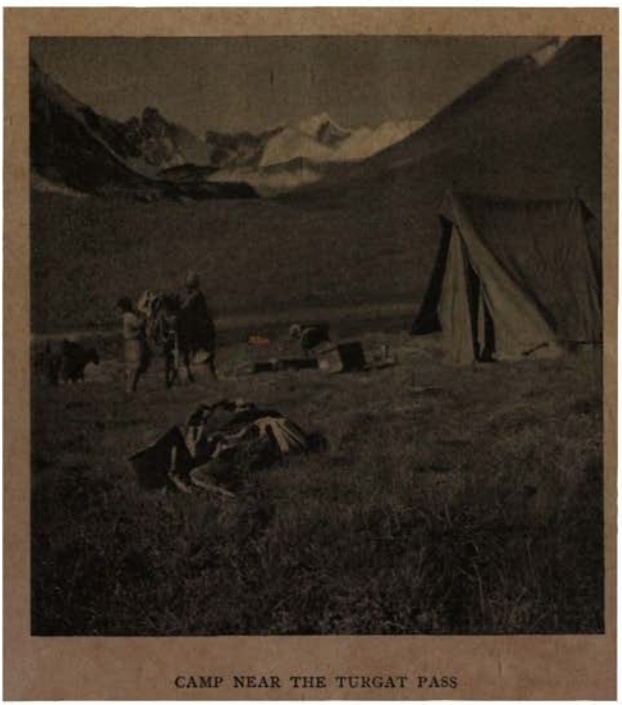
The next day we continued following the river, but we had left the zone of shrubs and entered a narrow and desolate valley which continued to ascend as the scenery became wilder and the rocky walls on either side loftier. After a dreary march of twenty miles we arrived at Pashkurgan, where we found a few Kirghiz akois stationed by the Chinese as a rest camp. The people in charge were the best type of Kirghiz I had yet seen, and the children were quite good looking. The heights around the camp were crowned with loopholed walls probably erected in the time of Yakub Beg. Early the next morning we passed Chakmak, where we found a large Chinese fort garrisoned by three soldiers. The entire garrison turned out, presumably to overawe us, and a Chinaman demanded our passports, which he carefully held upside down while he pretended to read them. Chakmak occupies a very strong position, which in the hands of troops properly trained would be practically impregnable. Two ridges project from opposite sides of the valley and nearly meet in the middle, each being crowned with forts and loopholed walls, which, though of mud, were exceedingly thick, and probably impervious to bullets. In the time of Yakub Beg this place was held in strength, and the loopholed walls protecting the entrance to the side nullahs are

still standing. We saw much game in the neighbourhood of Chakmak, and I shot a few chikor which provided an agreeable change in our diet.

We reached Kizil Kurgan in the afternoon and found a Kirghiz camp, where we were made welcome. At this place the Suok river comes in from the pass of the same name, and up this, at a place called Suok Allaganchik, is said to be the best spot for *Ovis Poli* in the Thian Shan range. I learnt from the Kirghiz that four years before an Englishman had come from Kashgar to shoot *ovis* and ibex in this district, but I was unable to identify him. Further along the road we overtook a caravan of camels going to Naryn, laden with cotton clothes and walnuts. Their Kirghiz riders threw bags of earth on the ice, of which my people gladly took advantage. On the opposite side we passed three Cossacks returning to Kashgar, and several streams of camels on their way there unladen. Shortly after this it began to snow, and the remainder of the day's march was cheerless in the extreme, and I was very glad when I distinguished two akois in the distance, which I knew formed a camp of rest for travellers. When we arrived, jaded and weary, we found the camp full of people; and as our party had been reinforced by some Kashgar merchants, who were going our way, it was no easy matter to allot the accommodation. The Kirghiz in charge of the akois told me they were in the service of the Russians at Akbashi, the nearest post, and were stationed here for the convenience of the Cossacks passing to and from Kashgar. The spot was desolate and afforded no conveniences. Wood had to be brought from a spot three marches off. The baggage was very late in arriving, the ponies having been ten hours on the road, and some of them were badly done up. It was, moreover, extremely cold, and I shivered a good deal, seeing which the Kirghiz owner of the akoi very considerately suggested that his sister-in-law, whose husband was away at Kashgar, should share my couch. I declined the offer with many thanks, and by dint of making my bed up close to the fire I managed to get a little warmth in me. The akoi was pretty full: on the opposite side slept the two Kirghiz women

KIRGHIZ TENTS ON THE PAMIRS

and a number of children, while around me were the Kashgar merchants and the Kirghiz. It was impossible to get any food at this place, and even Kallick's genius failed to produce anything more tempting than a tin of army rations and some boiled hominy. In the morning I distributed some coral beads, lump sugar, and old buttons, belonging to liveries and uniforms, among the ladies, who were highly delighted with their gifts, which they said they valued more highly than money. We found that the snow, which had fallen throughout the night, had entirely obliterated the track. We therefore engaged one of the Kirghiz to act as guide up the ascent to the Turgat Pass. We found the ascent, which attains an altitude of 13,000 feet, easy-going, and thus found ourselves in the middle of the main Thian Shan range, from which we obtained our first view of the Russo-Chinese frontier, which traverses a flattish valley leading to the lake known as Chadir Kul. It was, however, impossible to distinguish the lake from its surroundings, owing to the whole country being covered by a coating of ice and snow. Beyond the valley on all sides and as far as the eye could reach, stretched mountain ranges,



CAMP NEAR THE TURGAT PASS

all silent as the grave and lacking any sign of life. We descended slowly through deepish snow to the frozen lake, which has no outlet and contains brackish water. Its length is fourteen miles and its width six, and it is said to lie at an altitude of 11,050 feet. We crossed to the northern side over the frozen surface and began to ascend a nullah leading to the Tashrabat Pass, which we found rose up sheer before us. The ponies were already worn out and refused to proceed, but the mountain had to be crossed somehow, and so we fastened ropes to the animals, and by dint of hauling and judicious encouragement we got them up one by one. Two of them, weaker than the others, collapsed on the way and rolled down the slope, pitching their loads and my rifle-cases to the bottom of the nullah, but we recovered these articles, and eventually reached the summit all safe. The view was fine but monotonous, the whole landscape being decked with snow. The descent was precipitous and slippery, and both Kallick and I had great difficulty in getting our ponies safely down, and I was glad when we eventually arrived at the bottom unhurt.

Five miles further on we reached Tashrabat, where we found some akois placed by the Russians for the use of travellers. Here there is a most curious old fort, said to have been built by Akballa Khan, who reigned 1300 years ago in Kashgar. According to Kirghiz tradition Akballa owned all Andijan, as well as the whole of the Ili country; and I also learnt that there were a number of similar forts scattered over the country, which had been built not so much for military purposes as in order to afford shelter to travellers in this desolate region who might remember him in their prayers. I examined the fort, and found that it had walls of extraordinary thickness and that the masonry was of a type unlike any I had previously seen. The whole was in a wonderfully good state of preservation: there must have been quite a hundred separate chambers, many of them in good repair and now used as stables. The servants with the ponies managed to get stuck on the top of the pass, where they spent the night. They came in the following afternoon, apparently none the worse for their adventure.

An old Kirghiz at this place had an enormous eagle, which he told me he had paid 200 roubles for. The bird killed a great many foxes in the course of the year, thereby bringing the owner a good deal of money from the sale of the skins. He assured me that it would also kill *Ovis Poli* and ibex, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this.

My baggage ponies delayed me a day at the fort, and the Kashgari merchants, who had kept me company and had shown me many attentions, went on ahead. I saw *Ovis Poli* and ibex on the hillsides, but they were not of any great size, so I did not bother to go after them. I learnt from one of the Kirghiz that women were very scarce in these parts. He told me he had given three camels, seven ponies, and twenty-three sheep for his wife. I had already made the lady's acquaintance, and thought her dear at the price. The quantity of tea and bread which the Kirghiz consume in the course of the day is astonishing. From six in the morning till dark they are continually eating bread soaked in tea, and the baksheesh received from travellers usually takes this form. The next day I went on to Keltebuk, where we emerged from the mountains on to an extensive plain dotted with Kirghiz encampments, each with its attendant camels, horses, and sheep. Here I found a well-built wooden house, owned by some better-class Kirghiz, and used as a dâk bungalow. The interior was well warmed by a Russian stove, a most admirable institution in this climate, and one which saves a deal of trouble. In the morning the stove is cleaned out, and a small quantity of wood placed in the grate. As soon as this is consumed sufficiently to give out no smoke the grate is securely closed, and the heat, being confined in the stove, warms the room thoroughly. This stove, though only made of mud, answered its purpose well. The room was quite hot and afforded a very pleasant contrast to the outside temperature, which at the time was 17° below zero. My own room was most comfortable, being spread with rugs and numdahs, while I was provided with a table and chair as well as cups and saucers. My host's wife was a very pleasant looking woman and had a very pretty daughter, who was evidently unmarried, as she did not wear the white pugga-

ree, which is the badge of matrimony. The girl, however, was kept in the background, a measure which I learnt was necessary in these parts, owing to the partiality evinced by the Cossacks for Kirghiz ladies. I had a long conversation with the mother respecting her daughter, and learnt that she was engaged to be married, and that the price to be paid for the damsel was seven camels, thirty ponies, and a hundred sheep, representing a value of fully £150.

A ride of twenty miles from here brought me to Akbashi, which place I found surrounded by a mist rising in the form of steam from the headwaters of the Naryn, which are warm. This river rises in the mountains close by, and is the principal source of the Sir Daria. The river is here divided into a number of channels, and must be quite 300 yards wide. After several unsuccessful attempts we found a ford, and on emerging from the mist on the other side came upon the Russian custom-house, one of the low white buildings so characteristic of the Russian *régime*. Here I left my belongings, while I went to pay my respects to M. Sozontoff, the sous-prefect of the district, to whom the consul at Kashgar had given me an introduction. He received me most hospitably, and although he spoke only Russian and Turki I managed, with Kallick's aid as an interpreter, to get along with him capitally, and we speedily became excellent friends. Madame Sozontoff had turned two Kirghiz women into domestic servants, and they looked very odd dressed in semi-European costume.

M. Sozontoff was a keen sportsman, and the walls of his house were decorated with many trophies, among them the head of a great Thian Shan stag, which looked to me very much like the wapiti of North America. He told me that these beasts are pretty plentiful in the pine forests which clothe the mountain sides around. The Russians are certainly a most charming people to meet, and the hospitality they extend to the wandering Briton is a thing to be remembered all one's life. Indeed nothing could exceed the kindness of my entertainers. The only fault I had to find with the treatment accorded me was the fact that I was expected to drink a pint of brandy with each principal meal, moreover if I

tried to get off with less my host appeared greatly hurt. M. Sozontoff was under the chief of the district at Karakul, but had himself command over an extensive country, 250,000 square versts in extent, containing eleven volusnais or 20,000 yourtas. He had an enormous amount of work to do, and the Government allowed him no assistance whatever. He had to provide a clerk and all the materials for his office out of his pay of less than 200 roubles* a month. He showed me the post, which had just come in, containing some 150 letters from his chief—reports, complaints, &c.—and it was also his duty to look after the repairs of the post-houses on the Vierny road for a distance of 200 miles without being allowed any travelling expenses. What would officials in our Indian Service say to the miserable pay and the hard work of these Russians, whose life is one of perpetual exile and who rarely obtain leave.

M. Sozontoff was shortly going to Kashgar to arrange with the Russian Consul-General there for the construction of a postal road from Akbashi. He told me that the undertaking would not cost his Government anything. The Kirghiz would all subscribe according to their means, as a good road would enable them to get about in the mountains, and take their sheep and beasts to the Kashgar market with greater ease than at present. One is struck by this example of the use Russians make of the inhabitants of countries that come under their rule, and it seems a pity that the Indian Government does not take a leaf out of their book, and endeavour to open out communication on our frontier under similar conditions. The Russian method of dealing with the native population of their dominions has been arrived at by the Russian dislike of the policy of sending expeditions to burn villages and levy fines and then run away. Where the Russians go they stay, and this is the proper method of dealing with Asiatic tribes. Since Russia has taken over the vast tracts of Turkestan, Ferghana, and Bokhara, they have never had any trouble whatever with the people, and consequently they are able to devote their time and attention to the opening of roads and the construction of railways in all

* £30.

directions. If our Government were to adopt a similar policy: to station troops in chosen positions throughout the length of our frontier, and to run light railways from the plains, we should avoid these constantly recurring and costly expeditions. Troops have to be fed and paid for, wherever they are stationed, be it in the plains, or in the hills; and many of the valleys, Tirah, Swat, and numbers of others, contain ample grain and rice to feed such troops as it would be necessary to station there, if the tribes are disarmed. A distinguished Russian officer, whom I have had the pleasure of talking to on the subject, said he would guarantee that with ten thousand Cossacks he would pacify our frontier in a month, and so thoroughly that there never would be any more trouble; and that he would ask for no commissariat or transport arrangements, none of those thousands of camels, mules and ponies, which our Government is obliged to employ. The Cossacks would feed themselves as best they could, and he would guarantee they would find a living. He may have understated the number of Cossacks necessary, but I would venture to say that they would do their work thoroughly, and at an eighth of the cost that we should.

The Kirghiz are obliged to supply ponies as required to officials who are travelling on Government service, for which they receive no payment, and they have been brought so thoroughly to respect the Russian dominion, that they never attempt either to evade the requirements made of them or to give any trouble. Their only weakness is a hankering after smuggling, which is carried on to a considerable extent across the frontier, chiefly in coral, brought to Kashgar by Indian traders, and for this there is an unlimited demand. If the Customs officers at Akbashi can only be successfully evaded, there is a huge profit to be made at this game, but it is difficult as well as dangerous, inasmuch as the djiggitts employed by the Customs officer as frontier guards are Kirghiz, and therefore thoroughly in touch with everything that is going on. Whilst I was there a native was captured while attempting to smuggle coral; he had forty pounds weight on him, and had been informed against by a spiteful

relation. I met the offender being escorted to Karakul by Cossacks, where he probably got three months' imprisonment, as well as being condemned in a heavy fine. All the coral captured is sold by auction, the Government deriving quite a large sum from this source annually.

The Customs officer at the frontier proved himself an awful nuisance. He insisted on opening all my boxes, and

KIRGHIZ TENT PREPARED FOR THE RUSSIAN OFFICER

examining my stores and rifles. He even wanted to open the tinned provisions I had to see what was inside, but on my remonstrating with him, consented to send a djiggitt with my baggage to his superior officer at Naryn. Fortunately, I had met this officer at Kashgar, and he very promptly settled matters, offering me profuse apologies for the stupidity of his deputy.

My host was evidently very popular with the Kirghiz in his district, who all agreed he was the best officer they had ever had. Most of the Russians are not above taking bribes from the people with which to supplement their scanty pay; indeed, this custom is quite general, and no attempt at concealing it is

made, the plea being that they cannot live unless they accept presents. My friend, however, assured me that he had never accepted anything, and his evident popularity testified to the fact.

There was a fine view of the northern slopes of the mountains I had just crossed from Akbashi. The average height of the range appeared to be about 15,000 feet, and the pine clad slopes intersected by nullahs reminded me of Kashmir. These mountains being less steep than the Himalayas, are in most places easy going for the sportsman. The great Thian Shan stag is found in fair numbers in some of the nullahs round about, and I was shown a head of great size, which made me eager to go out and hunt. This remarkable animal (*Cervus Canadensis Asiaticus*) closely resembles the American wapiti, and although smaller in stature carries even larger antlers. The best time of year for shooting these creatures is from August until November. These stags were formerly far more numerous than now, but the natives kill the young ones for the sake of their horns, which are highly esteemed by the Chinese for their supposed medicinal qualities, and fetch as much as one hundred roubles a pair among the merchants who export them to China. Besides the stags, there are quantities of wild boar in the neighbourhood, which the Cossacks shoot on every opportunity for food.

On January 10 I resumed my journey to Naryn, having engaged two sledges for the conveyance of myself, servants, and baggage. The distance was only thirty miles, the first fifteen of which were along a gradual ascent, after which the road crossed a flattish ridge, and descended into the deep nullah which leads to Naryn. The whole of the country is covered with patches of pine forest, the tops of the trees looking quite picturesque as they protruded above the snow. I reached Naryn late at night, and was most hospitably welcomed by the Custom-house officer previously mentioned, who insisted on my becoming his guest. The following day I called on the commandant, and made the acquaintance of a most genial doctor, who spoke French fluently. There are about 170 infantry quartered at Naryn, besides some twenty

"IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE TO FORD THE GLACIER STREAMS EARLY IN THE MORNING"

mounted Cossacks, who are mainly employed for postal services. They are a sturdy lot of men and as hard as nails, and though their principal diet consists of black bread and weak soup, they appear quite contented, never having been accustomed to anything better.

Naryn is a pretty little town standing in the midst of wooded hills, the houses are of the whitewashed pattern, typical of a Russian settlement, and there is a small bazaar. At night most of the Russian inhabitants looked in at my host's house, and I was keenly questioned respecting Indian affairs, and more especially about the Indian army. The Russian officers appeared particularly interested in the Gurkhas, and greatly admired a *kukri* which I happened to have with me. Naryn is 234 miles from Kashgar, and the temperature at night was 27° below zero, the lowest I had yet experienced. The commandant, who was a lieutenant in the infantry, appeared to be a very pleasant man, but as we did not speak any language in common, I could only converse with him through Kallick. I ascertained that he had seen ten years' service, and that his pay was seventy roubles a month. He very kindly arranged with three Russians who were returning to Vierny with their carts to take me there for forty-six roubles (£6 18s.), which I thought extremely cheap for a distance of 242 miles, but the men had got empty carts, and were very glad to earn what they could. Had I gone by the post (it is run by a company under Government supervision) it would have cost nearly three times as much, but I should have gone quicker. I purchased in the bazaar some high felt boots for myself and my men. These boots, which are universally worn by the Russians in these parts, are quite invaluable in the winter time, and the investment was one of the best I made on my journey.

The first stage was a short one. I travelled in a sledge drawn by two horses, one inside and the other outside the shafts, the latter being kept constantly galloping. We passed numbers of akois by the side of the road with numerous flocks and herds, until, after going sixteen miles, we arrived at On-Archa,

the first post station, where the unkempt Russian in charge was busy eating his dinner. There was a good room for travellers, provided with hard sofas for sleeping on, one of which I occupied. The only decent accommodation in these rest houses is reserved for persons travelling by the Government post, and it is optional for the men in charge to allow other travellers to avail themselves of it or no. I always found, however, that a small piece of silver sufficed to gain me the *entrée* everywhere. The provision made at the post houses for the inner man does not vary. It includes the universal samovar, or urn, which is immediately produced on arrival, and tea and eggs are almost invariably forthcoming. A regular dinner, such as one obtains at an Indian dâk bungalow, is unknown in Asiatic Russia; when I asked for a meal my demand created the greatest astonishment, and I had to be content with the eternal samovar and unlimited eggs; it is truly wonderful how one can accustom oneself to live on such fare. A Russian traveller will think nothing of eating a dozen eggs at a sitting.

At On-Archa the sledges were exchanged for carts, which my drivers had left at the post station on their road to Naryn, borrowing sledges for the one stage. I was not at all gratified by the change from the smooth-running sledge to a jolting cart without springs. The vehicle was open, but branches had been cleverly arranged to form an arched roof, over which my large macintosh sheet was tied, and when I had arranged my rugs and pillows inside, this formed a fairly comfortable conveyance. Some distance beyond On-Archa we quitted the open country, and entered a defile with steep pine-clad sides and a pretty stream running through the bottom. Unfortunately, everything was shrouded in snow, and one had to guess at the natural beauty of the view. We passed a Russian officer and his wife in a sledge. They appeared to be travelling without baggage, nothing but a small handbag being visible, and they seemed much surprised at the apparition of my two carts laden with paraphernalia.

On the third day from Naryn we crossed the Dolun Pass, 9800 feet, the ascent being very long but gradual; from the

summit there is a good view of mountain peaks rising from the pine forests, but nothing comparable with those we had seen elsewhere. Beyond the pass the character of the country entirely changes, and we descended to a ravine between bare and desolate mountains. The road was very rough, and the jolting awful. Some twelve miles below the pass was a postal station, where I saw a farm that reminded me of home, with its chickens, ducks and good-looking cows. After resting awhile, and patronising the inevitable samovar and bread, we started again about four o'clock, and found the road so rough

THE SLEDGES WERE EXCHANGED FOR CARTS

that I couldn't stand the jolting, and we had to go slow until we got to Kumbil-Arta post house, where we arrived late at night. Here Kallick created a diversion by a quarrel with a postmaster's wife, due, I believe, to her misunderstanding some of his conversation. All along this dreary stretch we had met long strings of camels, carrying bales of Yarkand cotton to Vierny and Karakul, or returning with Russian cooking pots to Kashgar, or carrying supplies to the Naryn garrison.

Towards the evening of the fourth day I emerged from the mountains and entered the basin of Lake Issyk Kul, staying the night at the house of one Dimitrioff, a Cossack settler at Kutemaldi, some five miles from the shores of the lake. The

65985

accommodation was rather limited, consisting of only two small rooms, one of which was occupied by the mother and five daughters, two of whom were married and had children. The house was overpoweringly hot, and the double windows were sealed up. I tried hard to discover some means of introducing air, but the family did not favour the scheme and I had to desist. My hostess did all she could to make me comfortable, and offered to make arrangements for a prolonged stay, so that I might try for stag on the hills. She appeared quite grieved that her husband was away at Vierny, and pressed me to remain until he returned. But I decided to push on and declined the invitation. The situation of the house was extremely beautiful, and as I watched the setting sun against the amphitheatre of snow mountains, I was quite enchanted by the beauty of the scene. I parted early in the morning from my hostess and her daughters with much handshaking and resumed my journey along the road, which got worse and worse. A parting offer was made me by one of the girls at Kutemaldi, who promised that if I stopped the day she would send for a Kirghiz shikari who knew all the best places for *Ovis Poli* and stag, and finding this did not tempt me, told me that I could purchase a live stag at Karakul if I wished, as the natives caught them young and brought them up as pets.

From Kutemaldi I went on to Jilarik, passing through a valley in which were numerous Kirghiz yourtas, and then crossing a fine bridge entered a narrow defile, in which the cart road was the most infamous I had ever seen. The Russians seemed to take the road over ups and downs without deviations, and my driver tried to make up for lost time by careering at full speed over the most impossible ground, where the cart was constantly poised at an alarming angle on two wheels or hanging over a nasty drop into the river. We constantly overtook long strings of camels laden with grain and carts carrying arrack, and these occasioned many delays. Sheep, of which we met many on the road, were treated of no account, the cart dashing through them at full speed, and those that did not get out of the way must have come off badly. I stopped at midday to have some tea, and enjoyed a talk with some Kirghiz, one of

whom told me that he had shot 700 *Ovis Poli* and ibex in his time, and that the horns of the former never spanned more than six spreads of his hands in these parts, whereas in the Pamirs, where he had also been, they sometimes measured eight-and-a-half spreads. Towards evening a great storm of wind sprang up, which made short work of the improvised shelter over the cart, and I was thankful to reach the post station at Jilarik, where, however, I found the guest chamber occupied, and had to be content with the use of the kitchen, which I shared with the postmaster's family, my three drivers, servants and my dogs. From Jilarik there are two roads leading to Vierny; the main postal route by Pishpek and Tokmak, and a shorter one which leads to Kastek, crossing the pass of that name, and subsequently joining the postal road. I elected to go by the latter, and on the following day we quitted the main caravan route and continued straight on, descending from the mountains and crossing a wide plain to a large village named Karabulak, the first purely Russian village I had come to. Here a charming old couple made me at home and provided me with some delicious bread and all the luxuries of the season in new laid eggs and milk; the house was much like an English farm-house, spotlessly clean, and in the yard behind were quantities of stock and some stacks of sweet-smelling hay. I was so tired from the effects of the jolting I had suffered that I engaged a pony to ride the next day as far as the top of a long ascent which had to be made.

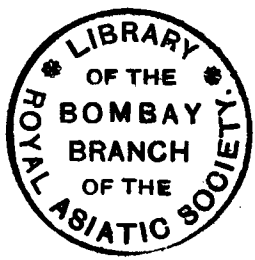
We started early, but found the ascent very steep and very long, and we did not get to the summit till three o'clock in the afternoon, we then descended on the other side, having some trouble with one of the ponies, which nearly collapsed. Eventually we tied it on behind a cart and arrived long after dark at a Kirghiz mud hut containing the customary two rooms, which was already well patronised. However, we got in and succeeded in getting some dinner and a place in which to set up my bed.

The next day, the eighth since leaving Naryn, the road, to my delight, left the mountains for good and entered a huge plain level as far as the eye could see, and covered with snow.

At last I had arrived on the Steppes, which looked like a vast frozen sea. On all sides were numbers of Kirghiz huts, while thousands of sheep and ponies seemed to find a living in the grass under the snow. The first village I came to was Osunagach, the scene of a battle between the Russians and Khokandians in 1860, when the slain were buried on a hill above the village and the place marked by a large cross. Something out of the common was evidently going on, judging from the number of young peasants and girls with scarlet shawls I saw driving about and chanting monotonous tunes. I ascertained that a wedding had taken place and that the feasting was still in progress. The house which my driver selected for me to pass the night in turned out to be that in which the wedding feast had taken place, and the rooms reeked of arrack, and the whole company appeared intoxicated. I left my servants to clear a space for my bed and baggage, and went out to have a look at the place and get a breath of fresh air. The news of the arrival of an Englishman had evidently spread, for I was presently surrounded by a crowd of people in various stages of intoxication, who embarrassed me so much that I was obliged to seek shelter in my lodging, into which several of them followed me and were only eventually got rid of after much difficulty. I passed a much disturbed night, dancing and singing being kept up in the adjoining room till the early morning; while occasionally inquisitive people would open the door to see if I was asleep. At last I could stand it no longer, and I summoned my drivers, who were with the party in the next room, and told them that if the noise didn't cease I should have to seek a fresh lodging and shouldn't give them anything beyond the terms of their contract. This threat had an immediate effect, and the company reeled out into the street, filling the air with drunken shouts.

The next day sledges were once more substituted for carts, and we joined the main road from Tashkend, on which signs of civilisation were apparent. A line of telegraph posts stretched across the snow-covered steppe as far as one could see, and there was plenty of traffic in sight, in marked contrast to the country I had traversed for some weeks past. The

driver of my sledge was a very artful man, and he kept his ponies immediately behind a sledge laden with hay going to Vierny market. Occasionally we let the ponies get up to the hay and have a mouthful just to encourage them, and thus we got along at a very good pace, and after a pleasant drive of forty miles along the northern base of the Thian Shan range, which is locally known as the Ala Tau, we arrived at Vierny on January 26, having covered the 464 miles from Kashgar in twenty days.


LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

CHAPTER V

VIERNY TO BALKASH

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend;
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed,
Far as the eye discerns, without an end.
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been.

BYRON.

THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE, VIERNY

CHAPTER V

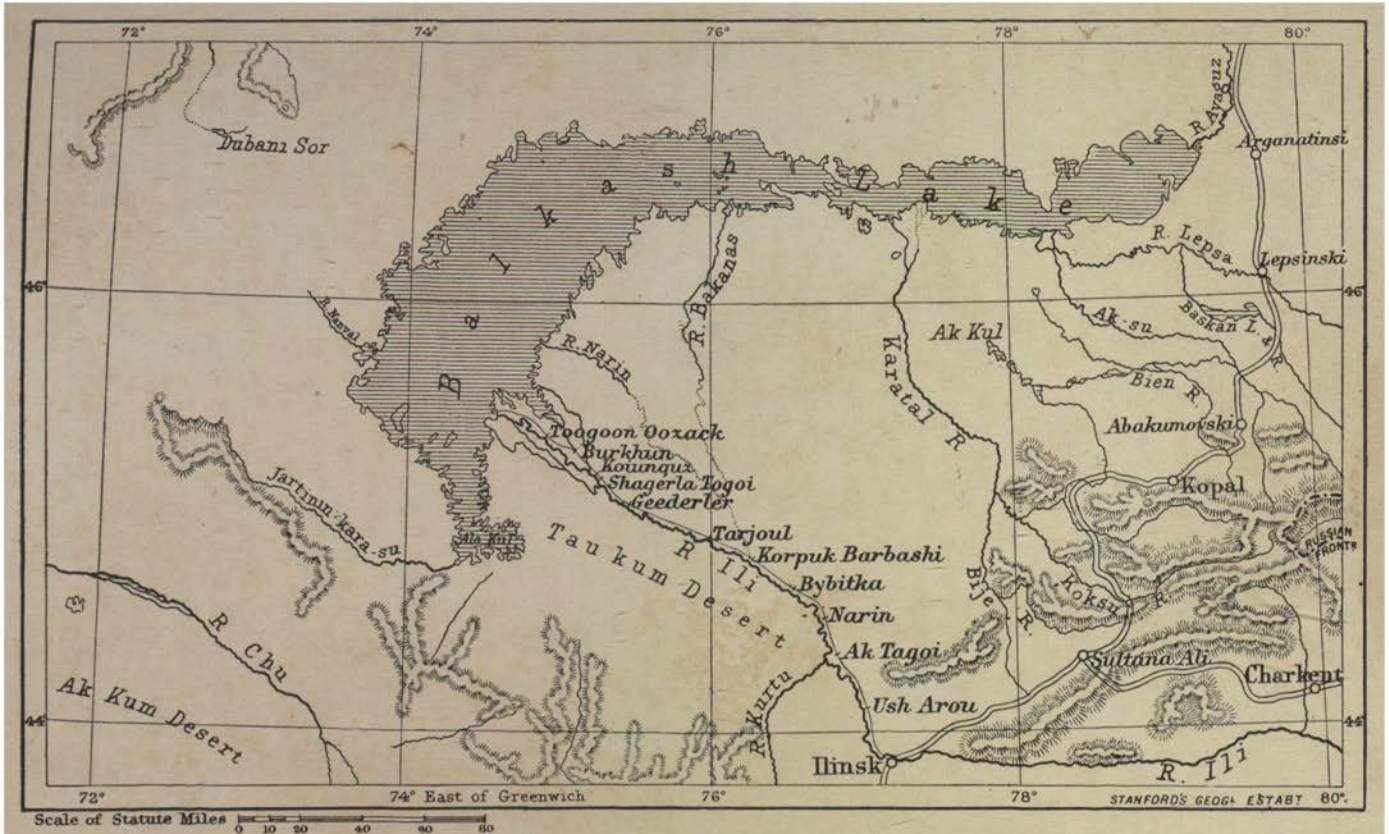
VIERNY TO BALKASH

At Vierny—M. Gourdet—General Ivanoff—Semiritche—Cheap fruit—Prospects of sport—My expedition—Chilik—My bag—Tiger prospects — Ilinsk — Cossack hunters — Strengthening vodka—Victimising the Kirghiz—Trouble with the natives—Tiger tracks—Extreme cold—Lake Balkash—My first tiger.

THE first thing I did at Vierny was to call on M. Gourdet, a French gentleman, who holds the post of chief civil engineer of the province. M. Petrovsky had given me a letter of introduction to him, and he received me most kindly. I found that he spoke English fluently, and think he was glad of an opportunity of conversing with me, as he told me it was a rare thing to meet any one in Vierny who spoke the language. M. Gourdet advised me where to stop, and I found myself installed in a large, bare but clean, apartment at the principal hotel, my servants and baggage finding accommodation in a room opening out of it. It hardly came up to the English notion of an hotel, for there were no beds in the rooms, the only articles of furniture being two sofas, a table, and two hard chairs. I also discovered that no regular meals were served, the custom being for visitors to make their own arrangements about feeding. The samovar was, however, always available, and bread could be obtained daily from a

neighbouring baker, who sold the best French bread. Meat is very cheap in Vierny, the price being about threehalfpence per pound. With this and a selection of the excellent tinned provisions to be obtained everywhere in Russia, I managed to do very well. The rooms were heated in the usual Russian fashion: by immense stoves in which wood was burnt; and Kallick was able to do the cooking I wanted in one of these, but it was impossible not to draw invidious comparisons between the comforts of the Indian dâk bungalows and the hotels of Russian Central Asia. My greatest difficulty at this particular establishment was in the arrangement of means wherewith to wash. Nothing in the shape of bedroom furniture or bath was provided; my own collapsible india-rubber basin had met with an accident, and I was at a loss what to do. The Russians apparently content themselves with a vapour bath at periodic intervals, and between the whiles regard the matutinal tub with disfavour. At last I succeeded in improvising a tub out of a mackintosh sheet, which answered the purpose sufficiently well. In the afternoon the hotel proprietor took me in charge and showed me round the town, pointing out the principal shops. There were some large stores and "universal providers," at one of which I purchased a suit of ready-made clothes and some shirts for £3, while at another I was persuaded to invest in an astrakhan hat, which was exceedingly comfortable, and gave me quite a distinguished appearance. The streets presented a very busy scene. Numerous sledges, drawn by fine-looking horses and smart-trotting ponies, dashed along, and every one was muffled up in furs so closely that it was only in the shops it was possible to see the women's faces.

After purchasing the necessary articles for adorning the outer man I directed my attention to a wine and spirit store, where I spied, greatly to my delight, the magic name of Guinness inscribed on imperial pints of stout. The price was stiff—eight shillings per bottle—but it didn't seem exorbitant when one considered the distance it had travelled from its native land. The stout was excellent. My two dogs evidently appreciated the delights of civilisation, for on my return I



LAKE BALKASH AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY

LAKE ISSIK KAL

found them inside my bed, which had been made up on the sofa and placed near the stove for warmth, for it was many degrees below zero outside. I found on overhauling my boxes that their contents had suffered considerably from the jolting on the rough roads. Among other misfortunes a big tin of vaseline had come open with disastrous results, and a number of cheap watches which I had brought with me for presents had been completely smashed up.

The next day a police official came to the hotel to ask me for my passport, which was afterwards returned to me endorsed, and I sent my letter of introduction to Governor-General Ivanoff, who promptly sent a messenger to say he would be glad to see me at one o'clock. M. Gourdet came to fetch me in his sledge, and we drove together to the Governor's house, a fine building with a magnificent reception-room and a parquet floor. The General, who spoke a little English, received me very kindly, and invited me to dine with him the following day. On the way back M. Gourdet took me to visit some excellent co-operative stores organised for the benefit of the official community in Vierny. Here one could buy anything and everything. Most of the goods came from Moscow to Omsk, and thence to Semipalatinsk by the river Irtish in steamers, whence they were brought by caravan, the total cost of freight being three roubles the pood of forty pounds. Most of the shares in this undertaking are held by officers, who receive 12 per cent. for the use of their money. I bought a quantity of tinned provisions at the stores at very moderate prices, and afterwards went to the principal tea-shop, where all kinds of tea could be procured, though the prices were very high, nothing good being obtainable under six shillings per pound. Russian beer was to be had everywhere in Vierny. This was a palatable drink, and proved a welcome change.

The dinner party at the Governor's was extremely pleasant, and the conversation interesting. The General had served under Skobeleff, and had also been a member of the Russian Commission appointed to meet Sir Peter Lumsden for the purpose of defining the Russian Afghan frontier. He gave

me some interesting information respecting the Siberian Railway, on which the traffic seems to be increasing amazingly. Several officers were present at dinner, and the conversation turned on politics. The officers spoke of Russian ambitions in Asia, and deplored the handing back of Kulja to the Chinese, who they affirmed could make no use of the country, which offered an enormous field for exploitation. Russian officers take a very keen interest in politics, and they speak their mind freely. The recent appointment of General Kuropatkin as Minister for War excited general surprise, and was held to be inimical to Great Britain, since the General was known to be what we should call a forward policy man.

I learnt that Semiritche, of which province Vierny is the capital, is as large as France. Yet the Governor's pay is only £1500 a year, including all allowances. Fruit grows in extraordinary profusion in Vierny, and is ridiculously cheap. Large duchesse pears cost a kopek apiece, melons, apples, strawberries, and gooseberries abound; indeed, the only fruit which fetches any price to speak of is grapes, which, owing to the cold winds that prevail, do not as a rule attain perfection. I noticed a great number of soldiers walking about in the streets, and on inquiry learnt that the garrison on a peace footing consisted of two regiments of infantry of 464 men each, a regiment of Cossacks 600 strong, one battery of artillery, and a hundred sappers. M. Gourdet showed himself an enthusiastic sportsman, and if he had not been so hard pressed by his official duties would have come with me on an expedition to the mountains. He knew the Thian Shan well and all the best places for sport. He had shot quite a number of the great Thian Shan stag, and he told me that specimens of this fine beast were still to be met with in fair numbers, notably in the valley of the Tekes. These stags are of enormous size, and the does, though smaller than the male specimens, are fully equal in size to the stag of Europe. In the spring and early summer months these creatures are eagerly hunted for the sake of their young horns, of which small specimens still in velvet fetch as much as thirty roubles apiece. The profits derived from these expeditions induce the Russian and native

AKBASHI

hunters to embark on them with the greatest ardour. This constant harrying has had the effect of decreasing the herds very considerably. I was told, however, that I should have no difficulty in obtaining a head or two within a week's journey of Vierny. As to other kinds of game, M. Gourdet informed me that he had shot many *Ovis Poli*, or *Ovis Karelini*, as they are called, in the Thian Shan, where he told me that they are extremely numerous; their horns, although

SUMMER ENCAMPMENT OF THE SEMIRITCHE COSSACKS

more massive, are not so long as those found on the Pamirs. Ibex are also met with in most of the steeper nullahs. Besides these, two kinds of bears are to be met with. One, a dark brown brute peculiar to these mountains, is distinguishable by the long white claws on its fore feet, a peculiarity which induced Severtseff to name it *Ursus Leuconyx*.* Snow-leopards are also plentiful. All these animals may be shot within a few days of Vierny, which is an excellent starting-point for the sportsman, being within a few days' drive of Tashkend, a terminus of the Trans-Asiatic Railway.

I was very anxious to get a shot at a Thian Shan wapiti, and M. Gourdet was good enough to send for a celebrated

* Severtseff identifies his *Ursus Leuconyx* with the Himalayan *Ursus Isabellinus*. Prejevalsky, however, holds that they are two distinct species. The Himalayan bear is also met with in the Thian Shan, where it inhabits the elevated plateaux bare of trees.

Kirghiz shikari, whose assistance I sought to enlist. The man very wisely refused to commit himself to any promises, but undertook to conduct me to a place where he had seen several fine stags a month or so before. I obtained the necessary papers from the Governor and set about making the needful preparations. The Kirghiz proposed taking me to Chilik, about ninety versts from Vierny in the Kulja direction, from where we were to ascend the Chilik river and then branch off westwards up the Asi nullah, and encamp by some woodcutters' huts at its head, where the wapiti had been seen.

M. Gourdet came to see me off. I had engaged two sledges for the journey, Kallick and I occupying the first, while Tilai Bai, with the dogs, rifles and luggage, filled the other. The air of the steppes was keen and exhilarating, and the sun shone brightly. We skirted the base of the northern slopes of the Ala Tau and passed the openings of many tempting nullahs all deep in snow. We passed two villages in the course of the day, and about five o'clock arrived at Turgen, where we stayed the night. The next day, shortly before noon, we arrived at Chilik, which appeared to be a village of fair size. It was Sunday, and all the peasants wore their best clothes, while the women sported gaily coloured shawls wrapped round their heads. Being a holiday, most of the people were the worse for drink, and we experienced some difficulty in finding the Starista, or Elder's house. We got there eventually, however, and I was civilly received by the old man, whom I showed the letter given me by General Ivanoff, which was to the effect that I was to be supplied with what I required. I had some difficulty in persuading him to provide me with an experienced hunter, as this article was not specially mentioned in my papers; eventually, however, my offer of a liberal wage attracted some Russian shikaris, who confirmed the reports I had heard of the Asi nullah. I found my ignorance of Russian handicapped me greatly in the making of my plans, and the Turki of Kashgar differs greatly from that spoken by the settlers of these parts. These simple people had never even heard of an Englishman, and plied me with many strange and amusing questions. They wanted to know whether there

were any Kirghiz in England, and asked how many wives I had. Kallick, who never lost an opportunity of exaggerating my importance, replied that in England I was a Pasha, meaning a very big man, and that I had a hundred wives. The women of the house were greatly excited at this piece of intelligence, and I soon had the room full of fair questioners, who plied Kallick with endless interrogatories. While this was going on I had got out a map of the country to show the shikaris who were going with me, but they couldn't understand, never having probably seen such a thing before.

KAZAK OF THE STEPPE

The next morning we mounted on sturdy ponies and started off at ten o'clock. The road lay up the Chilik, a broad nullah, with its sides clothed with pine forests, of which only the branches protruded from the snow. We camped that night at the mouth of the Asi nullah, and the next day arrived at the woodcutters' huts of which I had heard. These lay in a narrow gorge sheltered from the wind, and were quite snug; we slept in one, while the ponies occupied another. The snow lay all around piled up in pyramids of fantastic shape in places where it had drifted. The surface was, however, quite firm, and the going was easy when we started early the next morning and divided into two parties to search for signs of wapiti.

We covered a good deal of ground without coming upon anything to attract our attention until at last in a small shel-

tered glade we came across the place where the snow had been scraped away until the moss underneath had become exposed, while the stunted juniper and birch trees around showed signs of the keen appetite of the stag. We kept below the denser pine forests, as the Russians advised me that I was more likely to get a chance of a stag on the lower slopes, as the animals, when driven by hunger, would leave the denser wood and descend in search of food. The men were equipped with snow-shoes and managed well enough, but I had none and found great difficulty in getting along. We were high up, and the day being fine and sunny we enjoyed a magnificent view over the steppe, which stretched away into the distance one huge unbroken level plain. Away to the north and north-east the snowy ranges beyond the Ili river were plainly discernible. With considerable difficulty we followed the track of the stags upwards, for there were two of them, and the slot of one testified that its owner must be a fine beast. Toiling upwards was hard work, and made us terribly hot, but by two o'clock we reached the summit of the pine-clad ridge, and found ourselves on the edge of a plateau bare of trees. The tracks led straight away, and we didn't seem to be getting much closer to our quarry. I therefore sent a Kirghiz back to camp to fetch some food and blankets, while we went on after the stags. We stalked all the afternoon without success, and retraced our steps at dusk to meet the Kirghiz without having caught sight of our game. I was ravenously hungry, and eagerly devoured the food when it arrived. The men rigged up a rough shelter of pine branches, and we slept round the fire wrapped in sheepskins. In the morning the sky became overcast, and it was evident that it was going to snow. We therefore deemed it prudent to return to camp, and we reached the woodcutters' huts about mid-day. Here we found a Kirghiz who had come up from an encampment in the Chilik Valley below to say that he had seen some large ibex that morning. It was, however, too late to do anything that day, and the snow began to come down in the evening, and continued all night. There was evidently going to be a prolonged fall. It was no use running the risk of being snowed up, so we decided

to return, and we started the following morning and arrived at the Kirghiz camp by the Asi river about one o'clock, where we heard that the ibex had been seen again that morning. After a hasty meal we started off, and on turning up a small nullah close by I spied the ibex not more than five hundred yards away. They were scraping in the snow, trying to get at the grass beneath, and they were evidently quite unconscious of our presence. We tied the ponies to a bush and crept on. I managed to get within a hundred yards before the smaller of the two bucks became suspicious. Then he uttered a shrill note of alarm, and off they started. But the big buck was doomed, and an easy broadside shot as he crossed before me laid him low. The smaller animal was prevented from escaping upwards by a snowdrift, which compelled him to turn back, and he also fell an easy shot at fifty yards. The horns of the larger beast proved to be fifty inches long and twelve in girth, and formed the finest trophy of its kind I had ever seen. I felt rewarded for my previous disappointment by the events of the day, and having shown the Kirghiz where to cut the heads off I rode on and arrived at Chilik before nightfall. I was awarded a great reception by the Starista, and my room was full of villagers till a late hour.

The Kirghiz shikari turned up in the course of the evening, and expressed himself much disappointed at my want of success with the big stag, and he assured me that if I returned in March I should have a better chance of success than now, as there would not be so much snow on the mountains. And so we returned to Vierny, making a couple of halts at villages on the way in order to change horses. I was much amused at one of these by the astonishment evinced by the Russian peasants at the effect produced in a cup of tea by the insertion of a single pellet of saccharine. They could not make it out at all, and I think regarded me as a sort of fetish. We got back to Vierny late in the evening, disappointed at not having obtained our wapiti, but compensated by the possession of a fine ibex trophy. We were all very glad to reach civilisation once more, for nights spent in the Thian Shan in the depths of winter have their discomforts.

The morning after my arrival M. Gourdet came to see me, and we had an interesting conversation on the prospects of Russian Central Asia from a commercial point of view; and M. Gourdet pointed out a number of openings which exist for the profitable employment of capital. He claimed that it was absurd that no one had thought of erecting cotton mills at Tashkend, from which place 4,000,000 poods (66,000 tons) of raw cotton are annually transported to Moscow at a cost of 1½ roubles (4s.) a pood, to be there manufactured and to be returned to Turkestan. The whole of this three roubles might be saved, and thus any enterprising firm setting up in Tashkend would be able to undersell the Moscow merchants and control the sale of cotton goods in Central Asia. Sugar is another article in which enlarged trade might be developed. The demand for this in Central Asia is very great and rapidly increasing, and the whole supply is derived from European Russia; and yet excellent beet is grown in Tashkend and Vierny, and the amount of land available for its culture is practically unlimited. A sugar factory once started on the spot would be certain to succeed and bring in a large return to its shareholders. Tanning on a large scale would also produce good results, as the supply of hides from the thousands of herds kept by the Kirghiz is very large, and these are all sent to Kazan, many thousands of miles away, and the fat brought back in the form of candles, for which there is a large demand. These are only three of the instances offered by M. Gourdet, but there is so little enterprise among the Russians, and the arbitrary methods of the district governments tend so strongly to prevent capitalists risking their money in buildings and establishments which may at any moment be peremptorily closed or handicapped by official orders, that it is scarcely likely the existing condition of things will be soon altered.

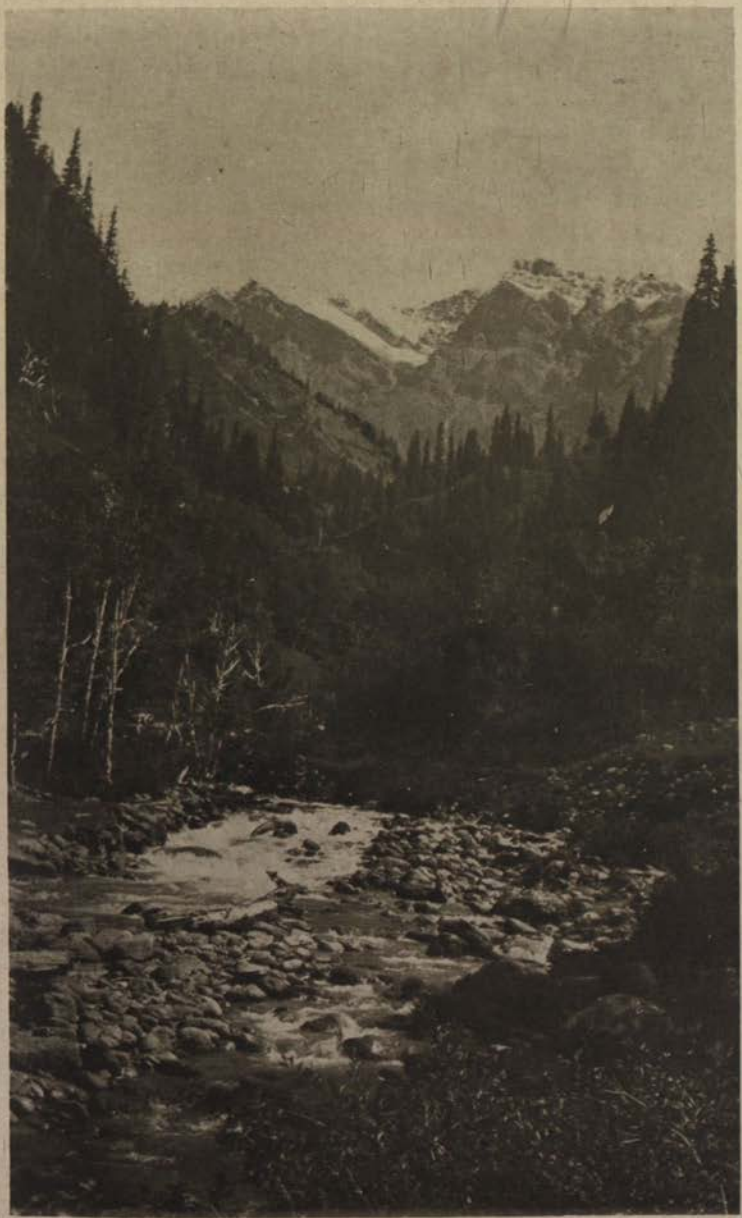
I gathered in the course of my conversation with M. Gourdet that tigers were still to be found in the neighbourhood of Lake Balkash, but I was warned that the numbers were largely reduced and that the information afforded by the natives was very unreliable. The country in which these beasts were said to roam was little known, and the true state of affairs could

only be gauged by a visit to the spot. I had heard of the existence of tigers in this region before, and had already made up my mind to try for a tiger if only I could get the necessary authority to do so. M. Gourdet very kindly undertook to help me, and went with me to interview the Governor, who at once assented to my request and gave me a document which allowed me to traverse the country on the same footing as a Russian officer. M. Gourdet also wrote to the Russian hunters at Ilinsk, the starting-point for Balkash, directing them to afford me every assistance. It had always been my ambition to try and obtain a specimen of the Central Asian tiger, and now as my wish was so soon to be realised I became impatient to start at the earliest moment. I knew nothing of the country I was about to visit, and was not aware whether the cold would be great or no, but I did not wish to be hampered with a large quantity of luggage, and so left the bulk of my wardrobe behind, a course which I subsequently regretted.

Aleshkoff, the proprietor of my hotel, offered to accompany me as far as Ilinsk, where he owned a store, and accordingly on the morning of February 4 we set out on our journey, Kallick and I leading the way in the best of the two sledges, Tilai Bai and the dogs with the baggage behind. The way was uninteresting down an apparently endless decline leading from the town to the steppe, which spread in every direction around like a mighty ocean of snow. The air was bitterly cold, and before we had gone many versts Kallick, whose somnolent powers were considerable, was fast asleep. After awhile the easy gliding motion of the sledge began to affect me and I became drowsy, and in time gave way to temptation and dozed off. I have no idea how long I slept, but when I suddenly regained consciousness, as the sledge jolted over a rut in the road, I found myself its sole occupant, for Kallick had disappeared. We promptly pulled up and looked back, but there were no signs of him, and so we waited, wondering what had become of him. After an interval of nearly an hour a dark speck appeared above the horizon, which in time proved to be my derelict cook, who came up considerably out of breath after running five miles in the snow. He had fallen out of the sledge

while fast asleep, and as soon as he had recovered from his surprise saw that the sledge was more than a mile away. I rated him soundly and we started off again, and after another twenty miles arrived at a lonely posting station, where we exchanged our sledges for tarantasses, as the sun had thawed the snow and the road was becoming heavy. We started off again and arrived at Ilinsk at half-past six. Our arrival occasioned considerable interest among the long-coated peasants and red-shawled women who had congregated in the village street, and a considerable crowd collected outside Aleshkoff's store, where he proposed to lodge me. As soon as I had refreshed myself with some tea and bread we sent for the hunters whom M. Gourdet had advised me to employ, but the men did not display that keenness which is so desirable in one's shikari. They made all sorts of excuses for withholding their services, and one man admitted he did not fancy tiger shooting but would be delighted to take me out after pheasants and hares. At last a Cossack appeared who seemed really anxious to accompany me; his name was Borodichen, and though his appearance was rather against him he looked wiry, and having little option in the matter I engaged him to come with me for twenty roubles a month and authorised him to retain three other men at fifteen roubles a month each, he undertaking to conduct me to Lake Balkash and to do his best to provide decent sport after tiger. One of the men thus engaged had been mauled by a tiger a few months before, but appeared keen to accompany me. It was late when I had made all the arrangements necessary and retired to my room, which I found I shared with my host, his wife and three children, though I, being the guest of honour, was allowed the entire use of the only bed. In the next room slept my servants and dogs, the four Cossack hunters, two female domestics, a Dungan merchant, and two recently born calves. All the windows were hermetically sealed and the atmosphere was distinctly stuffy.

The Cossack hunters held out fair prospects of success; they said there were tigers within 200 miles, and stated that they had little doubt but that we should be able to get on their track. I accordingly set about getting the necessary stores for my



THE ABODE OF THE THIAN SHAN WAPITI

approaching expedition, and found that I could obtain most things requisite at Aleshkoff's store. I accordingly laid in a big stock of flour and brick tea and a few bottles of vodka. While at Ilnisk I discovered that the Russians did not find vodka sufficiently strong for their stomachs, for they mixed it with turpentine, this concoction appearing to give them great satisfaction.

The next morning we started at ten o'clock in three sledges.

COSSACK ESCORT WHICH ACCOMPANIED ME TO LAKE BALKASH

Kallick and I as usual in the first, and three Cossacks, who were accompanied by a pack of a dozen hungry-looking hounds, and the luggage divided between the other two. The whole country was under snow and appeared extremely desolate. We crossed at once the Ili river by a fine bridge, and the road, then leaving the main Siberian highway, lay alongside the river, which we crossed again thirty miles lower down. Here the surface was frozen hard, and the breadth of the stream must have been fully a mile wide, and intersected here and there by small islands. The sledge-drivers crossed these anyhow, making no attempt to avoid them, and while tackling the steepish back of

one our sledge capsized, and Kallick and I with all our impedimenta were flung into a confused heap. The snow was, however, comparatively soft, and we sustained no injuries, though I did not resume my seat until we reached the further bank. A short distance beyond this we met a djiggitt, or mounted messenger, from the Kirghiz officer at Ilinsk, who guided us to a Kirghiz encampment close by, where a yourt had been prepared for my reception, which I found very comfortable. The surrounding view was very fine and the night a brilliant one, and I had no difficulty in reading print in the open at midnight. I was kept awake for some time by the Cossacks in the next tent, and I subsequently learnt from Kallick that they had got hold of my three bottles of vodka, which I had brought for emergencies, and finished them. When I taxed them with this the next day they swore the bottles had been broken and the sledge turned over. The next day's journey took us into an entirely new country, intersected by frozen water-ways and covered with rushes of a considerable height. We passed numbers of camels laden with fish from Lake Balkash, which forms the principal item of food amongst the people. It fetches approximately 1½d. per lb. during the winter and rather more during the summer months. Other camels we met laden with saxoul, a stunted shrub, the wood of which burns very slowly and retains its heat for a long time. It is excellent for watch fires, &c., but is not safe for indoor use on account of the poisonous nature of its smoke. At night I slept in a mud hut warmed by a Russian stove, which made the place so hot as to be almost unbearable, and in the morning my sledge-drivers insisted on turning back, alleging that their ponies would die of starvation if they went on further. I had no means of keeping them, and so watched them depart somewhat disconsolately, and turned to the Kirghiz in the hopes of arranging with them for transport. I did not, however, find the people very amenable. The only travellers who ever come that way are occasional Russian officers attached to the district, and these, on the plea that they are travelling on Government business, always insist on being provided both with transport and supplies gratis by these Kirghiz, so long as they remain in

their country. They did not appear, therefore, to be overjoyed at my appearing among them, and seemed doubtful when I offered them liberal payment for transport, much to the surprise of the Cossacks, who did not approve of my action. Eventually, however, the Kirghiz undertook to provide me with ponies the following morning; and at dusk a couple of my men rode off over the steppe to obtain the means of transport. In about

CROSSING THE ILI RIVER

two hours they returned in a very dishevelled state and with most of their clothes torn off their back. I learnt they had found some ponies outside a Kirghiz encampment, and were about to lead them away when they were attacked by a crowd of the nomads, who beat them severely. The men having provided themselves with guns started off again, and I subsequently heard some shots fired in the distance, but this was only to frighten the natives, and the next morning I found that the men had returned bringing with them a sufficient number of ponies to enable me to make a start. The Cossacks subsequently brought in the offending Kirghiz as prisoners, and

I explained to them I was perfectly willing to pay for the hire of the ponies. As soon as they had grasped this fact the people expressed themselves satisfied, and subsequently I had less trouble in obtaining transport.

We resumed our journey and pushed on some forty versts across the boundless steppe, being greatly entertained by the display of shooting made by the Cossack Borodichen, who killed two hares with bullets from his military rifle at seventy yards while seated on his fidgety pony. At night we came to three yourtas, where we camped, and later met a Kirghiz djiggitt who, being an official in the Russian service, I thought I could trust, and to whom I handed the money to be paid to the owners of the ponies I had hired. He promised to divide it as I told him, but I subsequently found that he had not parted with a farthing. Early next day we came to the commencement of a great rush jungle; the rushes were tall and strong, considerably over the head of a man on horseback. My spirits began to rise at the sight of the jungle, which became denser and wider as we went on; at night we got to two Kirghiz yourtas, where we stayed; five of my following, with an equal number of Kirghiz, occupied one hut, while I and three Kirghiz occupied another. Here we had further difficulties in obtaining ponies, and some Kirghiz, who refused to supply transport of any kind, even after showing my Government permit, which was written in their own language as well as in Russian, were seized by the Cossacks and brought before me. I told them that I was willing to pay for what I required, and in order to punish them intended taking them with me on the next day's march and handing them over to the Volus, or Kirghiz officer, who had his headquarters forty miles away. During the evening a fine large sheep was brought as a present to propitiate me to let the men go, but I sternly refused all attempts at bribery, and told them to take it away. Unfortunately the Cossacks caught sight of the animal, and immediately seized it and cut its throat, eating most of it themselves and giving the remainder to the dogs. I was very much annoyed at their action, as of course the Kirghiz imagined that I had authorised this course, but, as a matter of fact, I only discovered what

had occurred the following morning. And after all, perhaps it did not matter so very much, as the Kirghiz are not accustomed to be paid for sheep by the Russians, and I doubt whether they really appreciated the fact that I intended doing so.

The following day our retinue was considerably increased by numerous friends and female relatives of our captives, who accompanied us and uttered renewed cries and lamentations every time they caught sight of me. When, in the afternoon, we got near the encampment of the Volus I told the Cossacks to let the Kirghiz go, as their womenkind made such a noise with their crying and wailing that I had not the heart to take them before the chief, who exercises considerable powers in respect of fining and imprisonment. I was immediately mobbed by the Kirghiz and their friends, who vied with one another in kissing my feet and salaaming previous to bidding us farewell and retracing their forty-verst journey. I found the Volus stationed in the midst of a colony of mud houses, into one of which I was politely escorted. It was warmed by a Russian stove, and had plenty of rugs on the floor and walls. The Volus told me that he belonged to the Kopal district, and had some 1500 yourtas under him, from which he collected taxes for the Government. He told me that there were tigers to be found some forty versts away, and that he would accompany me himself the next day and do what he could to aid me in obtaining reliable information.

I was awoke next morning by a very pretty girl, who was, I ascertained, the daughter-in-law of the Volus. We started with a very superior pair of ponies, leaving the baggage to follow in charge of one of the Cossacks. We went at a great pace, and crossing a stream, found ourselves in a wild country covered with jungle and permeated by numerous waterways, which formed islands on which reeds grew to a height of twenty feet. We learnt from a decrepit old Kirghiz, who lived in a hut on the riverside, that there were tigers in the neighbourhood, and that a Tartar merchant, who had a camp some distance further on, had killed a large female the previous day by means of poisoned meat. This was good news, and I directed the owner of the hut to send my luggage on as soon as it arrived, while I

and the Cossacks, with my friendly guide, crossed the river and began to search for tiger tracks in the snow. I soon realised that it would be hopeless to attempt a tiger drive in miles upon miles of dense jungle with the limited number of beaters available, and I decided that my only chance was to mark my quarry down on one of the numerous islands where the extent of the cover was limited.

We came to the first tracks of a tiger at the foot of a narrow piece of land which abutted into the river, and gathered that the spoor was about a week old. We followed the tracks, which led us into the densest places, where we had to crawl on all fours to get along, and thus we progressed for over an hour, until I realised that it was getting late, and that the frozen swamp was not a desirable place in which to spend the night. We accordingly retraced our steps and regained the Kirghiz encampment shortly after dark. After dinner I held a consultation as to our future movements, and I decided to continue along the river on the morrow, when we divided into two parties and worked both banks. I shot some pheasants on the way, but saw nothing of the tiger. I learnt, in the course of conversation with the Nogai merchant, who had a mud hut with two rooms by the riverside, which he placed at my disposal, that tiger-skins were eagerly sought after by the Russians, and that along the river, where the few tigers remaining were supposed to be, the natives poisoned the beasts and brought the skins to him. These he subsequently took to Krasnovodsk, where they fetched high prices. It would have been useless for me to protest against this most unsportsmanlike way of obtaining skins. The Russian idea of sport has nothing in common with our own. The quarry is the main point in the Russian estimate of the subject, and provided that is obtained, the means are of no importance. The following day the Nogai accompanied me on the way to Balkash, and pointed out several favourite places for tiger, and before leaving me he made me a present of the skin of the tigress he had recently killed.

My eagerness to get a shot at a tiger had not been diminished by my failure, and I set about inspecting the ground in our vicinity more eagerly than before, in the hopes

of satisfying my ambition. It was therefore with the utmost delight that I saw, on mounting to the top of a hillock the next morning, the smoke of a fire on rising ground some five miles away. This was the signal that had been arranged between the two parties, and I knew that the Cossacks had come on an animal's tracks. We immediately descended, and entered the dense jungle, through which we fought our way for several hours, and I was just giving myself up for lost—no difficult matter in such a country as this—when I came upon a collection of yourtas, where, to my surprise, I found my baggage awaiting me. I soon gathered from the natives that this was the best spot for tigers along the river, and I accordingly decided to make it my headquarters. In the evening I had some more trouble with the Cossacks, who complained of the thinness of the sheep supplied them, and threatened to beat the brother of the Volus, who had been sent to accompany me and make arrangements. I very soon made them aware of my views of such conduct, and during my dealings with these gentry I had opportunities of studying several of the ingenious methods by which they maintained their finances. The one most in favour was to report to me that no ponies were procurable for the day's work, they having previously been bribed by the Kirghiz to say so. I of course promptly sent them off again, insisting on some being found, and knowing that they could at once lay their hands on the animals if they chose. Thereupon they would return to the Kirghiz, and seize the animals which they had previously been bribed not to take, and these they would bring in without explaining to the Kirghiz that I paid a daily wage for the use of each animal. I also discovered that they used to constantly make use of my name when they required anything for their own use, and in this way accumulated a vast store of odds and ends, which, when I questioned them, they said they had bought.

The cold during my prolonged tiger hunt was intense. As soon as the sun went down a bitter wind would get up and continue all the night. A cup of boiling tea placed on a box within a yard of a large fire would freeze in five minutes,

and even the small stock of rum which I carried with me for medicinal purposes froze solid and burst its bottle. It was all but impossible to sleep at night, and I made up my bed immediately alongside the fire, retaining an old grey-bearded Kirghiz to stay up and keep it in. He never seemed to sleep, and I used to wake up and watch him as he kept his trust. He was a decrepit specimen of humanity, and certainly earned his twopence a night, which he appeared to think a princely income. Sometimes the ponies which had been collected overnight for the morrow's hunt would be taken away under cover of the night by their owners, the Cossacks protesting that it was done while they were asleep ; but Kallick told me that they took bribes to say nothing about it, so I instituted a system of fines, which worked fairly well.

We kept steadily along the river bank eagerly watching for tracks without success. I could learn nothing from the natives, who seemed to have a horror of speaking the truth. And the work was trying, constantly forcing one's way through everlasting reeds from morning to night, until our daily routine became so monotonous that I almost decided to return. One day I actually came upon two tigers basking in the sun in a sheltered spot in the long grass. They must have been awakened by our approach, and started up and made off before I could unsling my rifle. The sight of the black and yellow stripes served to encourage me, and I decided to persevere in my quest. Knowing that there were at least two tigers in my immediate vicinity, I tied up goats to trees in hopes of tempting them. But they refused my bait. Yet I was satisfied that there were tigers in the neighbourhood, for the ponies tethered outside nearly pulled the yourt over at night as they neighed and vainly attempted to stampede, and one night as I sat smoking by the fire a cow forced the door of my tent open in evident terror of something.

All this while we had plenty of shooting practice after wild pig, which abounded throughout the reedy wastes. The meat was given to the dogs, for the Mohammedans would not touch it, nor could I persuade Kallick to cook it for me. One day, as we reached a point called Burkun, about seventy versts above

Lake Balkash, we came upon numerous tracks of tiger which were evidently fresh. The tracks led into the jungle, which was here particularly thick, and we had to leave the ponies outside while the Cossacks and myself crept along the passage on our hands and knees; we did not succeed in getting very far, however, for the going was both difficult and painful. And so once more I had to give it up and continue towards the margin of the lake, where we fell in with some nomads, who called themselves Argoons, and differed materially in features from the Kazaks of the steppe. I may here mention that the Russian word Cossack is derived from Kazak, by which is denoted all the Kirghiz of the steppes and plains of Central Asia, while those of the Pamir and the Thian Shan are known as Kara-Kirghiz. I now explored the country overlooking the side of the lake, but the jungle was so high that it was impossible to get much idea of the lake itself. I managed, however, to get a fair view of the open ice from the summit of a low hill. I failed to get a glimpse of the opposite side, which is here some fifty miles distant, but saw a considerable stretch of the ice-bound waters, and was struck by the distance to which the dense rushes protruded into the lake.

Lake Balkash, or as the Kirghiz term it, Denghiz, meaning sea, for the surrounding tribes have never heard of any other, is in point of size the third of the land-locked basins of the continent, and has an area of 8700 square miles. Its margin is mostly shallow, and resembles rather a flooded morass than a great lake. It does not possess any great depth even in the middle, where it is said to average some seventy feet, and its water is so brackish than no animal will drink it. It is as a rule ice-bound from November until April, and is said to be gradually silting up, though this process has not so far affected the vast stock of fish with which the waters teem. The river Ili appears to empty itself into the lake by a number of channels, which present the appearance of an immense morass thirty or forty miles wide.

There did not appear to be anything to be gained by a long stay at Balkash, so we rode back the forty versts to Burkun, killing a couple of hours on the way in hunting some wild boar. On

the first night after leaving the lake the Volus' brother, who had done his very best in obtaining supplies and getting information, had a quarrel with the Cossacks. I noticed wherever I went that the Kazaks displayed the greatest dislike for the Russians, who I repeatedly heard invariably treat them very roughly, and never think of paying for food or anything they take from them. When accompanied by their own officers, they exercise great oppression on the people, who detest them accordingly. Last year the *sous-préfect* of the district came to shoot some distance below Ilinsk, and made himself so unpopular, chiefly, I was told, owing to his susceptibility to female charms, that the Kirghiz seized him one day, tied him to a tree, and gave him a thorough flogging. This caused great excitement at head-quarters, and fifty Cossacks were sent down, and they arrested a number of the principal men, all of whom were heavily fined and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. I was assured that now the Kirghiz appreciated that I desired to pay them for what they provided, I should not experience any more difficulty as to my requirements.

The next day I learnt that tiger tracks were to be found in the neighbourhood of Burkun, and I at once set out to examine these for myself. I found that the rumour was thoroughly justified, as not only did I find recent tracks, but we came across a freshly killed young boar, on which the marks of the tiger's teeth and claws were plainly visible. It seemed as though the beast had been disturbed at his meal by our arrival, and a regular tunnel through the reeds left no doubt as to the direction in which he had gone. We immediately set about to follow up his tracks, and stooping down crawled in the tunnel and crept along for fully half a mile without being able to stand up. The jungle was so dense that the daylight scarcely penetrated, and I realised that my position was not a particularly safe one. The two Cossacks with me were, however, both good shots and well armed, and I had been disappointed so often in my search after tiger that I determined to push on at all hazards. After nearly an hour's creeping we came to a branch run, up which the tracks led, and we noted that there were prints of two well-grown cubs in addition to the pugs of a full-grown

animal. The undergrowth was, if possible, denser than before, and it was impossible to see even a yard ahead, and the dog with us did not like it a bit. After a couple of hundred yards we realised that we were coming to close quarters; the unmistakable feline scent was apparent, and we paused holding our breath and expecting to be sprung at as we strained our ears to catch the slightest sound and held our rifles at the ready. But

ON THE SHOALS OF LAKE BALKASH. TEMP. 35° F. BELOW ZERO.*

nothing happened, and cautiously we moved on a foot at a time until we suddenly heard a snarl on our right. And then I caught the glint of a couple of green eyes not ten yards off. And we stood stock still and gazed towards them while they did the same to us. Then slowly we watched the creature rise and we lost sight of the eyes as it turned to slink away. To fire would have been useless, for the light was so bad we could only vaguely make out its form through the dense undergrowth, and I began to realise that luck was against me once more,

* The first photograph ever taken of the nomads of this region.

when the Cossack immediately behind me took a step backwards and catching his foot in the reeds slipped and fell. The noise he made as he came to earth was not wasted on the great cat. In an instant we heard a swishing sound as the creature ploughed its way through the reeds making straight for us. I faced the direction from which it came and heard a low growl as the beast's head became visible through the reeds. I took aim and was about to pull when the second Cossack, unable to restrain his impatience, fired without effect, and the tigress was on him in a second. There was no time for hesitation. I swung round and pulled, as the Cossack fell before the impact of the charge. The brute bounded off her victim and fell quivering by his side, for my bullet, more by good fortune than by skill, had done its work and the tigress lay dead. I turned to the Cossack expecting to find him badly mauled, but he had got off lightly, and a coat slightly torn was all the damage he had suffered beyond a heavy shaking and a fright.

Having satisfied myself as to the condition of the Cossack, I turned my attention to the tigress and found her to be a truly noble beast, perfectly marked and with skin in the pink of condition. I was, however, in a quandary as to how to deal with my quarry in the close quarters in which she lay. To skin her where she had fallen was no easy task, while the impossibility of bringing ponies through the jungle did away with all idea of carrying her with us. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to set to, then and there, and secure my prize, which we did, and by dint of cutting away the reeds and so making a small clearing we secured sufficient space in which to do the necessary work. I should have dearly liked to have pushed on in the hopes of coming across the cubs, which I felt sure must be somewhere in the vicinity, but the day was speeding on and I had no desire to pass the night in such a spot. We had a twelve-mile ride before us after we had got clear of the jungle. It was bitterly cold, and I felt that it would be folly to delay. I therefore bade my Cossacks shoulder the skin and we started to creep out by the way we had come. It was late when we got clear of the swamp and found our ponies where we had left them. The excitement of the day had taken a deal out of

me, and I was tired out as I started for camp on one of the coldest rides I can remember. Thickly clad though I was, I was chilled to the bone and arrived in a state of fever, full of pains and aches in every part of my body.

The next day I was no better, but moved in an improvised sledge some miles up the river to Kokejeedar, where was the house of the Nogai merchant, Abdurrahman, whom I had met before. His house was substantially built of mud with glass windows, and was far more comfortable than the draughty yourts of the Kirghiz. There were two rooms, one leading into the other; the innermost had been prepared for me, and I found myself in more comfortable quarters than I had enjoyed for some time.

THE TARTAR MERCHANT'S HOUSE

In the evening the Cossacks made a disturbance, demanding that they should be allowed to come into the house. As I occupied the inner room and Abdurrahman and his people the outer this was of course impossible, and I sent them word to that effect. On hearing, subsequently, a good deal of noise outside I found a scene of great excitement going on. The three Russians had loaded their rifles and fixed bayonets, and Abdurrahman and his brother had got out their rifles, while some half-dozen Kirghiz held pistols. The women were all screaming and matters looked serious. I asked Abdurrahman what it was all about, and he replied, "My lord, these dogs of Russians insist on entering my house and sleeping in the room

which I and my family are occupying now that your Excellency is ill. I have prepared a yourt for them and had a sheep killed for them to eat, but they are not satisfied, and say that they will insist at any cost in taking possession of the room. I and my servants are followers of the Holy Prophet, and we will gladly die rather than go back on our word, so if they still insist we must fight it out."

As the house was the Nogai's and he had shown himself extremely civil to me I naturally sided with him, and calling the Cossacks in I paid them their wages, gave them a liberal present and dismissed them. They had not bargained for such prompt treatment, and had probably imagined I could not get on without them, but I felt too ill to bother about anything and adopted this course as the best means of obtaining peace.

The next day I tried the effect of an improvised Turkish bath, which was suggested by a Taranchi whom I had brought with me as interpreter, and by dint of sitting on the edge of a low stool while red-hot stones were placed under me and water poured over them, I experienced all the effects produced by our Hammams. The experiment was a great success. In the evening the fever had left me, and I took a strong dose of quinine, which completed the treatment. On the morrow I was completely cured, and I was gratified to note the evidently sincere satisfaction exhibited by Kallick and the Tartar merchant at my recovery. On going out of doors after breakfast I found a bevy of Kirghiz girls who, Abdurrhaman explained, had been sent by the Kirghiz chiefs, who were so honoured at seeing an Englishman among them that they had sent their daughters for me to choose a wife from. I was, of course, much gratified by this attention, but did not avail myself of the proffered opportunity. I found the Nogai the most intelligent native I had ever met, and had many talks with him on interesting subjects. He had been educated at Krasnovodsk, and had visited both Petersburg and Moscow. On politics he had much to say, and gave it as his opinion that an Anglo-Russian conflict was bound to come sooner or later; and he expressed his conviction that when it did come the Russians would find all the Mussulmen of Central Asia against them.

The following day I bade farewell to my hospitable Tartar friend, who kindly lent us some rough sledges, and departed on the return journey towards Ilinsk *viâ* Kokejeedar, and arrived safely at our destination, where we were met by Khoja Khan, a Kazak chief, who spent the evening with us. Tilai Bai, who had remained with the dogs at Ilinsk, had spent a very dull time and appeared overjoyed to see me again, his welcome being as pleasant as were the evidently honest expressions of regret uttered by Khoja Khan at parting. By mid-day following I reached Vierny, by no means sorry to have left the icy cold of Balkash far behind, and very glad to enjoy once again the comforts of a warm room and a bottle of Guinness' immortal stout.

On thinking over my trip I cannot say that I really enjoyed the month I spent along the banks of the Ili river. The cold was acute, and the task of looking for a tiger in such a boundless expanse of jungle is comparable only to seeking a needle in the proverbial stack of hay. I had come to the conclusion that the number of tigers is greatly exaggerated by the Russians. I estimated, as the result of my experience, that between the bridge of Ilinsk and the shores of the lake, a distance of about 330 miles, there are not more than a dozen tigers, and of these not one-half are fully grown. The country abounds with boars and wolves, pheasants and hares swarm, and I came upon two kinds of partridges. Although I cannot say I really enjoyed my trip, I am glad that I made it, as, apart from the fact that I got my tiger, the country is practically unknown, and the Kirghiz of the district form an interesting study. It is, besides, always refreshing to find oneself in a part of the world where Europeans are still a novelty, and where civilisation has not penetrated. To sportsmen who may think of visiting the country I would say, take plenty of warm clothes and buy what ponies you require in Vierny before starting. This precaution would prevent the constant wrangling and occasional free fighting which goes on over the obtaining of transport, and moreover makes the traveller independent of the Kirghiz ; and finally it is advisable not to go alone, and, if possible, to know some Russian. The best time to go is during the first fall of snow, which usually occurs at the end of November.

CHAPTER VI

BALKASH TO TASHKURGAN

But these recede—above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps
And throned eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche.

BYRON.

I QUITTED VIERNY FOR KASHGAR

CHAPTER VI

BALKASH TO TASHKURGAN*

A stag hunt—Caravan breaks down—Pishpek—Tokmak—Jilarik—The Baum defile—Kutemaldi—Lake Issyk Kul—Sart *versus* Cossack—Return to Kashgar—Permit to visit Russian Pamirs—A Chinese funeral—Petrovsky's suspicions—A truculent Beg—On the Pamirs—Lake Kara Kul—The Tajiks of the Oxus Valley—Tashkurgan—My reception by the Aksakal.

THE weather at Vierny was now so mild that I thought there might be a possibility of making an excursion into the mountains, and having a final try for the great stag. Mahomed Hassein, the Taranchi, who said he knew all the best places, offered to take me to the head waters of the Tekes, one of the principal tributaries of the Ili, which, he said, was well known as the most likely country to seek the horned monster, but I was doomed to disappointment, for just as we arrived the weather changed and became cold again, and the passes of the Ala-Tau became impossible. I was, therefore, compelled to return to Vierny much disappointed, and decided to start for the south forthwith. I quitted Vierny for Kashgar on March 14,

* The route described in this and the next chapter is clearly shown on the map of the Russian Pamirs facing p. 4.

just as a second thaw set in, which served to make the roads in a fearful state of slush, and rendered the employment of sledges an impossibility. We therefore hired a tarantass and reached Samsay after a dirty journey in the evening, spending the night there, so that we might be able to cross the river more easily by daylight. The next day I went on to Otar, fifty-four versts, where the post station looked as if it had been built on an island, for the steppe around was flooded with water from the melting snow. After travelling eight versts the tarantass stuck fast in the boggy ground. Two of the horses were thereupon taken out of the second cart and harnessed in front of the others, but the tarantass had sunk up to the axle, and we only succeeded in snapping the traces in the attempt to free it. Eventually the tarantass was rescued by the aid of some Kirghiz who were riding by, who succeeded in removing the wheels and dragging the cart to firmer ground. While this operation was in progress the five horses whom we had tied up to a telegraph post became extremely restive, and after struggling some time four of them broke loose and galloped off across the steppe back to the post station. I sent one of the Kirghiz after them with some anxiety, for the position was an anxious one; and he came back in an hour's time with the runaways, which we harnessed and proceeded on our way. A mile further on we stuck again, and finding that it was useless to attempt to push on with the horses we had, I determined to send back to the post-station for eight fresh ponies, while I prepared to pass the night in the tarantass. I had an unpleasant time of it, for the rain began to fall and continued till morning; nor was I consoled at seeing the mail to Tashkend pass about midnight in two carts with five horses to each, with an armed guard following behind. At 8 A.M. fresh horses arrived, and we resumed our journey, getting to Otar, fifty-four miles, about one o'clock. This station lies at the foot of a range of mountains, which the road crosses by a pass at a considerable height; and the postmaster strongly advised me to stay and proceed in the morning, as the road was in a terrible condition from the melting snow, and there was a strong likelihood of my not being able to cross the mountain by night. I took his advice

and stayed at Otar, passing the time in shooting some ducks and geese, of which there were considerable numbers on the marshy ground round about.

The crossing of the pass the next day was a rather difficult matter, but fortunately there were a number of Kirghiz at work on the road who had made cuttings through the snowdrifts, and roughly bridged some of the streams where the banks were steep. On the other side of the pass we came to a Russian village situated in the midst of the steppe, which in its present condition closely resembled an Irish bog. The village had only been founded five years before by colonists from Siberia. It was not a pleasant-looking spot to live in, the main street being a good three feet deep in black slime. From here to Pishpek, where I arrived at ten at night, the road continued in an abominable condition; and it took five hours to accomplish the last twelve miles, during which I was in constant fear that the horses would stop, in which case the wheels would have sunk in, and we should have been unable to restart.

Pishpek and Tokmak are two small towns of some 3000 inhabitants apiece, which have been founded by Russian colonists, and have grown in size on the advent of Dungans, Nogais, and others who have come to settle or trade. I had been told that they were pretty towns, typical of settlements on the steppes, and well worth a visit. This may be so in summer, but when I passed through the streets and surrounding country were knee deep in mud, and the people waded about wearing long boots, which reached up to the thigh. Sixty versts beyond Tokmak we left the steppes and ascended into the mountains until we reached Jilarik, where we rejoined the road I had come by, and we once more entered the famous Baum defile, said by the Russians to be one of the most beautiful regions in the Thian Shan. After traversing the defile I arrived once more at Kutemaldi, whence, accompanied by Dimitrioff, the Cossack, I made the circuit of Issik Kul. The road along the northern side was a good one, and continues along its entire length until it turns off at a right angle to Kara Kul. Here I stayed a couple of days with the chief of the district, who was deeply interested in some

carved bricks and stones bearing inscriptions, and other antiquities which had been cast up on the shores of the lake. From Kara Kul I sent back my luggage to Kutemaldi, and rode round the opposite side of the lake until I rejoined the post road. The path was in a shocking state, and we had some difficulty in finding a way round. We found the post road in a better condition, however, and four days later we reached Naryn, which I found entirely changed since my last visit. The snow had entirely disappeared, the sun shone brightly, the atmosphere was delightful, and the country beautiful. I only stayed at Naryn one night, being most hospitably entertained by the Russian community, and was made tell in fullest detail my experiences at Balkash. From Naryn I went on to Akbashi, where M. Sozentoff appeared glad to see me and arranged to go with me to Aksi, three days off, and make an attempt to get a stag. He sent on a couple of yourts with one of his men, whom we followed the next day. Aksi is a name given by the Kirghiz to a district lying to the east of Lake Chadir Kul. The neighbouring valleys have a great reputation for game, and among them are several densely wooded nullahs, which are rarely visited, and which generally hold a stag or two. Sozentoff and I went into different branches of the best

MONUMENT TO THE RUSSIAN EXPLORER, PREVERALZ, AT LAKE ISSYK KUL

nullah, and he was unlucky enough to wound a stag which subsequently escaped. Beyond frequent tracks I saw nothing, and found it very heavy work tramping through the melted snow. After a three days' stalk we parted, he returning to Akbashi, while I crossed the southern ridge of the Thian Shan in a westerly direction, and joined my caravan at Turgat.

Here I found a large party of Kashgar merchants, who had been sent back from Naryn by the Customs officer because their passports had expired. There were three Cossacks with them, who told me that they had a most unpleasant task, as the Sarts were exceedingly troublesome to manage. I had ample evidence of this fact the next morning, for when the Cossacks gave the order to march the Sarts refused to move. The Cossacks thereupon produced their whips, and a turmoil ensued which ended in half a dozen of the Sarts bolting up the mountain side, while three more, in a frenzy of rage, took off all their clothes and lay down in the dirt and snow, refusing to budge. I did my best to pacify the merchants, who eventually promised to proceed quietly to Kashgar—a promise they did not fulfil. The same evening the Cossacks caught me up again empty-handed, and reported that they had had a free fight with the Sarts soon after I left which had ended badly for the Russians, who were quite outnumbered, being only three against twelve. The Sarts had fallen on them, seized their rifles and ponies, and made off towards Kashgar as fast as they could, leaving the Russians with a twenty-five-mile march to cover to Kizil Kurgan. They asked me to explain the facts to the Consul-General at Kashgar in order to save them being disgraced, a request which I willingly acceded to.

The Cossacks travelled with my party the rest of the journey to Kashgar, and the distance was covered without incident. I delayed a couple of days in the Shuyok valley, where I got half a dozen *Ovis Karelini*, the largest of them fifty inches in length of horn. As we left the Thian Shan behind us and descended down the narrow defile of Chakmak the air became much warmer. The rivers were in flood, and we had our work cut out to cross some of them. It was indeed only possible to cross the largest

early in the morning before the sun had gained sufficient power to melt the snow which had frozen in the night. Eventually we reached the plains again in safety, and we turned and regarded with some satisfaction the mighty chain of snow-peaks which traversed the horizon from east to west behind us. Here in the plain of the sandy desert the heat of the sun became intense, and with one accord we hurried on towards Kashgar, which wore a new guise and seemed quite strange to us. The air was full of sweet scents from the blossom of numberless peach, apricot, almond, apple and pear trees. The trees were in leaf, and Kallick and I pressed eagerly forward to enter the city, which seemed to us a veritable paradise. I was weary of the mountains and the cold. The fields of ice and the sight of snow-clad peaks had lost their charm. But the warm sun, the song of birds, and the perfume of flowers intoxicated me; for the first time for many a long day life appeared to be worth living; and so we strode on through the orchards and gardens until, late in the afternoon, dusty, hot, and tired, we drew up at the shady portal of Macartney's house, and our troubles were at an end.

I found to my extreme regret that Macartney had gone to Yarkand with Father Hendriks, but I was bade welcome in his absence by his servants, and put up in his house, whilst M. Petrovsky was good enough to feed me. Petrovsky received me like an old friend, and set about telling me all the gossip of the place. He had strange tales to tell of Hendriks, and said that he had been met on the way to Yarkand with a European lady in his cart. I pointed out how very unlikely, and indeed impossible, this story was without appearing to create much impression on my informant, but I knew that Petrovsky and Hendriks had been on bad terms for years, and had no doubt it was a trumped-up tale. I learnt that Mahomed Armin, who had been with Deasy when we parted in the autumn, had left him on his changing his plans, and that Deasy was now exploring the fastnesses of the Raskam daria. These were the only pieces of gossip of any interest, and I set about overhauling my wardrobe and stores in preparation for my next journey. I found that my wardrobe comprised an

extensive assortment of worn-out clothes and rubbish, which I sorted out and sent to the bazaar to be sold, but the result was not encouraging, as the whole lot only realised eleven roubles, and included the sum of fourpence for my high wading boots, which had cost me £2. The explanation of this was that the Sarts had objected that the things had belonged to a Feringhi, and were therefore unclean.

Whilst I had been away at Balkash General Ivanoff, the Governor of Semiritche, had very kindly obtained for me a

KASHGARIAN CHILDREN

passport to visit the Russian Pamirs, and I grew quite excited when I received the document, and conjured up visions of sport in regions which were rarely hunted; I therefore commissioned Kallick to lose no time in buying the dozen ponies suitable for the journey I was about to take. On the day after my arrival at Kashgar, the Shietai, or commander of troops, died, and I was invited to be present at the ceremonial practised by the Chinese on these occasions. The late official's residence was daily decorated, and the *élite* of Kashgar was present. The body was laid in state, gorgeously decked in curious embroidered silken garments, while the aspect of the deceased was rendered extremely grotesque by the fact that his mouth was crammed full of rice in order

to sustain him on his last journey. After much ceremonial and repeated entertainments extending over several days, during which the deceased remained on view, the body was placed in an elaborate coffin to be removed to Pekin.

Macartney and Hendriks returned from Yarkand on April 6, and both had much of interest to tell me. I gathered that Petrovsky's curiosity had been greatly excited about me, and he had told Macartney that he was convinced I was a secret agent of the British Government. The Consul-General had also ventured other equally absurd suppositions about me. Beyond being amused at this example of Russian acuteness it caused little impression on me, but I had reason later on to regret that I did not have it out with Petrovsky then and there, and satisfy him, as I easily could have done, of my *bona fides*. The Swedish missionaries stationed at Kashgar were at this time in great trouble. They occupied a native house in the city, which had been broken into, and they had been robbed of a considerable sum of money. They had therefore purchased from one of the Kashgarian Begs a plot of ground outside the city wall, where they were busy erecting a house of European design. I was sorry to read in the *Times* only the other day that this very house, which I had seen in course of construction, has since been demolished by a fanatical mob, who handled the missionaries very roughly.

The time passed pleasantly enough during my brief stay in Kashgar. I rode out with Macartney or Hendriks every day, made purchases in the bazaar, visited the members of the Russian community, and fraternised with the Swedish missionaries. During my rides I was glad to hear the cuckoo, which is quite common in Kashgar, and served to remind me of home. My second visit was indeed even pleasanter than my first, and the only annoyance I suffered arose from the frequent dust-storms. These occurred nearly every afternoon, when the sky would suddenly cloud over and a hurricane set in which carried the sand of the desert before it in great waves, filling the air in every direction, and even finding its way into the innermost recesses of the house.

My original intention had been to make westwards towards

Ferghana, and visit Marghilan, thence crossing the Alai and entering the Pamir from the north by the Kizil Art Pass. But M. Petrovsky did not favour this scheme at all, and took some pains to explain to me that there had been a change of government in Turkestan, and that since Baron Wrewsky's successor had arrived at Tashkend passports issued under the former *régime* were quite useless. So I decided to abandon

MR. AND MRS. HOCHBERG, THE SWEDISH MISSIONARIES IN KASHGAR

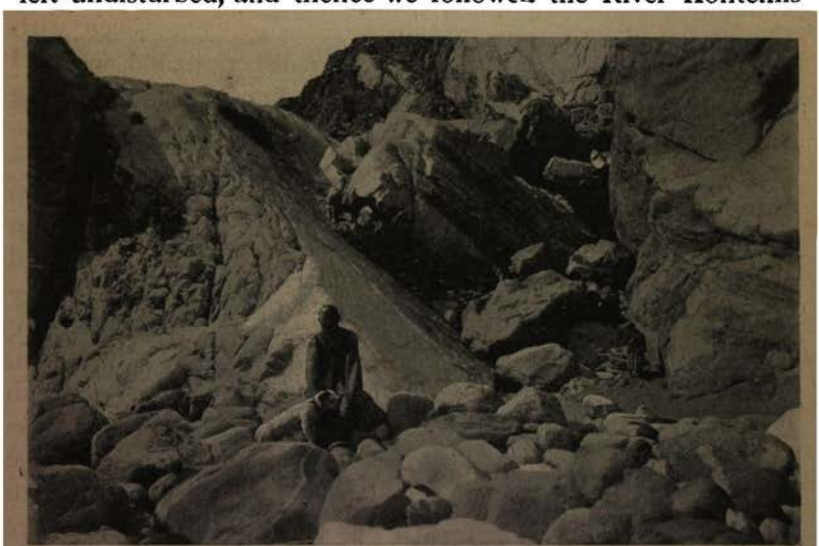
this plan, and to make up the valley of the Kontemis and cross to the great Kara Kul Lake, by whichever pass might be open. All this time Kallick had been busy arranging the caravan, buying ponies, saddles, corn, supplies for myself and the men, and miscellaneous articles suitable for barter. At length everything was ready. I paid a farewell visit to M. Petrovsky, to whom I was indebted for so many kindnesses, who presented me with a handsome Khotan dagger as a parting gift, and I rode out of Macartney's gateway for the last time. Macartney with his Munshi rode with me some distance, and then, with a hearty shake of the hand, bade me farewell.

I was in high spirits at the prospect of visiting the Russian Pamirs, which had always been one of my ambitions, and the mighty buttress of Mustaga Ata, which towered 25,000 feet above the plain on which I stood, served as a reminder of my approaching journey over the roof of the world. At the foot of the mountains I passed a village called Bhora Kuttai, where I found a Chinese regiment stationed. The Amban in command inspected my passport, and afterwards showed me his men and also some magazine rifles carrying seven cartridges, which were extremely well turned out, and which I gathered came from Urumychi. On the third day after leaving Kashgar we entered the Gez defile, in which the road was rough and difficult, and the fact that the river which flows through it was in flood rendered it impossible for the ponies to follow it, and necessitated their being taken by a mountain path a couple of thousand feet higher up, over a spur, and then down again to the bottom of the valley. The whole way was exceedingly steep and difficult, but we passed along without accident, and eventually arrived on an open plain, surrounded by mountains and containing a small lake, which turned out to be Boulungkul. The whole of this region was covered with a coarse grass. And beyond lay range upon range of mountains, their sides brown in colour and covered with wormwood, their tops tinged with snow and ice. These were the guardians of the Pamirs.

We halted a day to see to some necessary repairs and to shoe the ponies and give them a rest after the severe road they had come by. The Chinese, as usual, were extremely inquisitive, and continually crowded into my yourt, eyeing my belongings and even attempting to fire off my rifles. While here I witnessed the arrival of Chang Darin, the mandarin from Kashgar, who was on his way to Raskam to adjudicate on the claim of the Kunjutis for some land at the entrance to the Shimsal Pass. The garrison gave him a great reception, riding out to meet him with banners flying, and escorting him back amid salutes of ragged volleys, which greatly annoyed his pony and seriously endangered his seat.

My caravan had been augmented in Kashgar, and now

comprised Kallick, Tilai Bai, and two new acquisitions, who had come from Yarkand and who turned out very well. At Boulungkul I also engaged a Kirghiz who knew the Russian Pamirs, who undertook to accompany me as far as the great Kara Kul Lake and show me some likely places for *Ovis Poli*. A short distance from Boulungkul we came to Chagarakul, a small lake, where I saw vast numbers of wild fowl, which I left undisturbed, and thence we followed the River Kontemis



THE PASSAGE OF THE GEZ DEFILE

through a broad valley still covered with snow. At this point the mounted Kirghiz sent by the Amban at Boulungkul caught us up and informed us he had come to take our guide back. I was rather surprised at this, but assumed that, like all the frontier officials, he was mortally afraid of getting into trouble for having helped me on my journey. I succeeded in obtaining a fresh guide from a Kirghiz encampment, so did not miss the other. The next day we were entertained to tea at a Kirghiz encampment, where one of the women wore a beautifully embroidered head-dress, with numerous pendants of coral and mother-of-pearl, such as I had never seen before. I tried to buy it from her, but she wanted a "yamba" (£10) for it, which

was of course absurd. Later in the day we came to three caves in the bare cliff by the side of the road, which on inspection turned out to be full of grass which had been stored by the Kirghiz. Kallick insisted on loading two ponies with a supply of this, as he had heard that grass was short along the next day's march, and he pointed out in justification that grass would be plentiful enough everywhere in another ten days' time. The Kirghiz guide was very much frightened lest we should be seen pilfering, in which case he would have been well beaten as soon as our backs were turned. Soon after this episode I sent the guide on to Moja, our next halting-place, to inform the Kirghiz Beg, who has a permanent encampment there, of my approach. The Beg shortly afterwards came out to meet us, but showed himself a very truculent person and was extremely impertinent, professing ignorance of the way to Kara Kul and inability to furnish us with supplies of any kind. I showed him the orders of the Taotai, which were written in Turki, and required all Kirghiz subject to China to serve me with all my requirements, as well as an order from the Kirghiz Beg at Boulungkul to the same effect. These official documents did not produce the least effect on him. I offered liberal payment; but no, he would afford me neither information nor assistance. During our interview it had come on to snow and was bitterly cold. We had had a long and a tiring day in the saddle, and I was in no mood to put up with the insolence of this Beg, a young man recently appointed and evidently very full of his own importance. There was nothing for it but to adopt the Oriental method of dealing with such cases, so I seized him and beat him very severely, until he flung himself to the ground and, clasping my knees, implored me to desist; and having thus been brought to appreciate our relative positions, he hurried off to prepare an akoi for my reception, and when I subsequently turned in I found myself extremely well provided for, and noted that nothing was thought too good for me and my men.

It snowed all night, and I did not require much persuasion to agree with Kallick the next morning that it would be better to rest here until the weather improved. We spent the day in

our yourt, taking shelter from the cold, and in the evening I held a durbar, when the refractory Beg came to apologise for his misconduct and ask forgiveness. I replied that I should send a report of his conduct to the Taotai, and then Kallick acted a little scene and implored me to pardon the man's delinquencies, as he was sure that if the Amban once heard of his treatment of me the Beg would certainly lose his head. I assumed a severe attitude, and refused to commit myself either way. And I noticed that the Kirghiz were all very penitent and apparently greatly alarmed.

The next morning the weather improved, and the Beg, despite his thrashing and his humble demeanour of overnight, assumed an impertinent attitude, and asked Kallick what I should do if he refused to furnish me with a guide. Kallick replied that in such an event matters would be easily arranged, and that I should merely have him tied to my saddle by a rope and drag him along behind as far as I required his services. On hearing this he came to his senses, and I had no further difficulties with him.

The road up the valley lay through a morass, and the ponies distinguished themselves by trying to bolt; but I cured this propensity by tying them in threes, which necessitated our going at a walk. This proved so irksome to me that I dismounted and kept up with the cavalcade on foot. Some distance up the valley we reached a place called Ke-Akbashi, where there was a small outpost of Kirghiz frontier guards in charge of an old Beg, who turned out to be the father of the man I had beaten. Kallick told him what I had done, and he replied that I had done well, and that his son would know better next time how to treat a Feringhi who condescended to visit him. He hoisted a red Chinese flag in my honour, and offered to supply guides as far as Karakul, where he said there had formerly been vast numbers of *Poli*, but that a disease had set in among them and during the past winter thousands had died. In the evening one of the promised guides turned up. He was a Russian subject, and his home was at Kokui Bel, on the west side of Kara Kul. He confirmed what I had heard about the

disease among the *Poli*, and told me that the sheep had also become affected.

We continued our way up the valley the next day and found that the scenery became grander as we advanced, the views being magnificent and including the mighty Mustagh Arta, which, though a hundred miles away, stood out with its buttresses and ridges clearly defined. At the foot of the Kosh Bel Pass I saw some *Ovis Poli* low down on the plain; I also saw the bodies of three which had evidently fallen victims to disease. The pass presented no difficulties, and led on the far side to a bare country surrounded by mountains, and then another ascent across which we reached the Kara-Art stream where we found a couple of Kirghiz akois; here we rested. In the afternoon two Chinese Sepoys from the outpost of Mook came to see me, and were most civil and anxious to know how they could assist me. I learnt from them that the Kara-Art Pass was reported many feet deep in snow and quite impracticable for ponies, and the question arose how were we to get across the Chinese frontier. No one seemed to know whether any pass was feasible at the time, and all advised us to seek information from the Kirghiz at Kum-Bel, some twelve miles off to the west. We accordingly started out across the plain and duly reached the encampment. It was most beautifully situated by the side of a winding stream, and commanded a panorama of an immense range of snow mountains, which was no other than the Trans-Alai system, from which stood out two peaks of dazzling whiteness, the one, the Kizil Agin, 22,000 feet, the other, Kaufmann Peak, 23,000 feet. Here we learnt that though in a great part covered with snow, the pass was practicable, and we set out the following morning up a slope which was covered with frozen snow of such hardness as to necessitate our cutting out a way for the ponies. We saw several *Ovis Poli*, but were too busy attending to the safety of the caravan to bother about them. The descent was far easier than the ascent, and we soon reached the valley, which stretches up to the foot of the Markhun Su defile. This leads up to the sandy waste whence the Kizil Art Pass bordering the Alai Valley rises abruptly.

I made the height of that night's camp, which the Kirghiz call Kizil Kul, to be 13,600 feet. The surroundings were bleak and desolate, and there was little or nothing for the ponies to eat except a few scanty blades of poor grass peeping here and there out of the sand. The next day we climbed a ridge rejoicing in the name of Oiboolak, where there are several springs of excellent water, and here we met with the recently completed road which leads from Murghabi, the principal military post on the Pamirs, to Marghilan, the capital of Ferghana. The road is well made, and except over the Ak Baital and Kizil Art Passes, is generally level and open throughout the year, and in fine weather the mail carts cover the distance between Osh and Murghabi in ten days. From the summit of the hills at Oiboolak I got my first view of the great Kara Kul Lake. The view was dreary in the extreme, the whole landscape being carpeted with snow. Silence reigned everywhere around ; silence so profound that it oppressed me, for there was nothing to relieve the eye and no living thing to be seen. The lake is surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, and is divided into two portions by a ridge running north and south, which is connected with the mainland by a strip of sand. No river of importance flows into the lake, nor has it any exit, and its stagnant waters are so bitter that no animals will drink them. Notwithstanding this, however, the lake teems with fish. According to the natives the level of the lake rises periodically, the duration of the rising varying according to the season of the year.

By the side of the lake we discovered a dilapidated yourt within the remains of a ruined wall, and here we passed the night, which was extremely cold. Close by there is a rest camp and changing station for the post from Murghabi to Osh. I interviewed the Kirghiz in charge of this and had a long talk with him. He appeared greatly impressed by my Mannlicher rifle, and assured me that the Russians possessed nothing like it. I noticed great stacks of *Ovis Poli* horns lying about all round the post station. I endeavoured to draw the Kirghiz out on the subject of sport but without success, and so decided to try the nullahs to the south-west of the lake where I believed *Ovis* were plentiful notwithstanding the disease. Despite the apparent

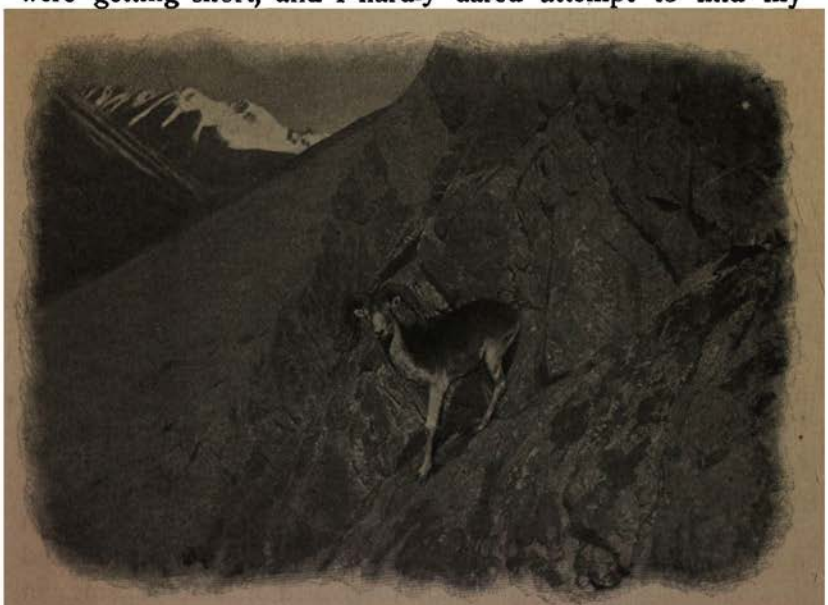
friendliness of the Kirghiz I noticed that he was distinctly suspicious as to my doings. I was asked if I had a passport, and it was suggested that I should go on to Murghabi and make the acquaintance of the Russian garrison there who would put me in the way of sport, and they also told me that they would have to report my arrival on the Pamir to the officer in command at Murghabi, as if they neglected doing so they would be certain to get into trouble.

When it was time to start the next morning the ponies were nowhere to be seen, and it was not till midday that they were brought back from the nullah where they had strayed in spite of their being hobbled. We skirted the edge of the lake all day along a sandy waste amidst desolate surroundings, in which the only sign of life was the screaming of the waterfowl, which occasionally rose from the margin of the lake at our approach. We camped that night by some fresh water close to the lake, and the next morning left Kara Kul and turned up a broad barren valley in a southerly direction. After going about four miles we turned up a defile, which forms a narrow passage through the mountains, and reached a river which we found in high flood. My men knew where to ford the stream, and promptly led the way, but three of the ponies refused to follow their leaders, and chose a passage for themselves, with the result that they got swept off their feet, carried away, and drowned, nor were their bodies recovered, thus causing an irreparable loss, for they carried my supply of flour and a quantity of grain, and what remained of the latter would barely last a week. I halted a day near the Kokui Bel Pass which leads to the Alai Valley and had some shooting, and succeeded in getting some photographs of live *Ovis Poli*. We then retraced our steps in a south-westerly direction, and passing on our right the Apak Pass we crossed a river and camped opposite a nullah called Tashkole, which is declared by the Kirghiz to be the best place for ibex on the whole Pamirs. I explored this nullah and found it very wild and beautiful, with plenty of traces of ibex and many horns lying about.

Two miles beyond we came to another nullah called Kokjar, where I found a Kirghiz camp, in which we took shelter while

it came on to snow. One of the Kirghiz seemed to be a man of some importance, and he told me that quantities of alum and sulphur were found in the neighbouring valleys, and that his tribe carried on a considerable trade in these products with the Alai.

I was beginning to feel anxious about my supplies, which were getting short, and I hardly dared attempt to find my



OVIS POLI ALIVE—NEVER BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHED*

way with what I had to Murghabi, the nearest point where I could expect to find fresh provisions, it was also difficult to obtain reliable information from the natives. I gathered, however, that there was a possible road by which I might reach Tashkurgan at the head of the Bartang defile, where I could obtain some flour.

Our road now lay along the mountain slope along the north bank of the river, and after covering a distance of five miles we came to a yawning chasm which seamed the mountain side and

* This sheep is the largest of the genus *Ovis* in the world; it stands 12 hands high and weighs 36 stone.

presented a formidable obstacle. It appeared to be half a mile wide and at least 1000 feet deep, while a stream of some size formed a series of cascades along its bottom. The Kirghiz, who had been provided by the Aksakal at Belaytuk to pilot me over the difficulties of the road to Kokjar, set to work to make a path down the precipice, using ibex horns as picks. The ponies were unloaded and lowered with ropes fastened round the neck and chest, and eventually all arrived safely at the bottom, to find a further difficulty in the form of a high bank which divided the bed of the nullah. From the foot of this obstacle the ground fell abruptly to the river some hundreds of feet below, and there was apparently no other way round to the opposite side. The men worked hard to scrape a rough track for the ponies, which Kallick assured me they would succeed in getting safely down. And sure enough six of the ponies each led by a man were safely conducted into the ravine, but the seventh unfortunately got frightened at a critical point, struggled, lost its footing, and fell headlong from the dizzy height with a crash to the rocks below. The loss was a serious one, but the rest of the animals arrived safely at the bottom, and we found ourselves by the side of the stream, where outside a thicket of birch and juniper bushes we camped. Our position was a very romantic one. We were surrounded by mountains of great height, whose precipitous sides rose sheer from the valley on all sides. Through the cliffs on my right I noticed a narrow defile intersecting the rocky mountain sides, which I learnt afforded a passage by the Yangi-Dawan Pass to the Alai. In our front the valley seemed closed by a huge conglomerate of dazzling snow and ice, from which issued the stream of limpid water which we learnt was called Thanwas. Early in the morning we followed the stream southwards, and noticed as we proceeded that the air got warmer and the signs of vegetation more frequent. In places we even came across some wild flowers struggling for existence in the crevices of the rocks. After a tiring march along a stony path we came towards evening to the end of the valley, where the stream we had followed effects a junction with that from the Karabulak, and after traversing a long and narrow defile in turn unites with the river Murghab at Tashkurgan.

"WE UNLOADED THE PONIES"

As we came in sight of the encampment some old men came towards us and gave us greeting. They were a new race of people to me—the Tajiks of the Oxus Valley. An old grey-beard, in answer to my questions, told me he was a native of Balkh, but that he had married a woman of Roshan, and so had stayed in the valley. I learnt that they did not possess any yourts here, having only come from Tashkurgan to look after the crops for a while, and slept amongst the rocks.

I thoroughly appreciated the luxury of pitching my tent on soft green grass, and what with the temperature of 45° and an abundance of firewood there was nothing further to be desired, and when the Tajiks brought me a bowl of delicious new milk I felt I was being spoilt. We delayed here for some time over-hauling our caravan and attending to the ponies, most of whom required re-shoeing. I had many conversations with the Tajiks, who told me that they came up here every year to purchase sheep, which they subsequently re-sell in Khokand at a good profit.

When all was in order once more we took farewell of our new-made friends and continued following the course of the river, which led us to a village called Pussore, a lonesome hamlet of some ten houses. The bulk of the inhabitants turned out to do us honour, and salaamed respectfully; they struck me as being miserably poor, and resembled the inhabitants of the upper Kunjut valley. At this hamlet we were met by the Aksakal from Tashkurgan,* who had started immediately after morning prayer, and now walked back with us. The distance was fifteen miles each way, and as the road was ascending and descending between the mountain-side and the river-bed the whole way, and was moreover in a very bad state, he must have enjoyed himself. The sun was very hot and the path a mass of stones, which made the going so bad that I dared not sit on the pony, and walked most of the way. I passed a good many

* There are three places of this name in Innermost Asia. Tashkurgan proper is the chief town of the Sarikol district; the second referred to above lies on the Bartang river immediately below its junction with the Murghab and Kudara; the third is situated north of Kashgar, midway between Artish and Kizil Kurgan.

Tajiks on the road moving to higher ground in search of fresh pasture. The women, who seemed to be rather good-looking, with rosy cheeks and straight-cut features, all ran away when they saw me. The sheep appeared to be a weedy looking lot, and the cows were even worse. I noticed a number of a peculiar breed of dog to which the people seemed greatly attached. They resemble deerhounds, and have very narrow muzzles, and were much feathered on their hind legs. A short distance lower down we came to a small village called Kara-kurgan, on account of the black slate rocks around. We passed the junction with the Murghab river, which seemed a dirty stream after that we have left, and entered a curious country where the mountains are built up of strata of black slate, which lay about in slabs and obelisks as if heaved up by some volcanic action. A very rough staircase had been made up the mountain-side of blocks of slate, which provided a very slippery foothold for the tired ponies. At the top, placed in a cup-shaped depression and perched some hundreds of feet above the river, lies Tashkurgan, a small hamlet of some twenty houses. The sun was setting in the west, and the snowy peaks up the defile of the Murghab were iridescent with a purplish glow. In the distance the winding river could be followed down its tortuous passage between narrow and precipitous mountains on its way to the mighty Oxus. As I stood gazing the natives gathered round and plied Kallick with questions. Who was I? Where was I going? What was my business? And then they understood that I was a Feringhi, a term applied indiscriminately to all Europeans except Russians. They told me I was not the first Feringhi they had seen, for thirteen years before a white man had come from Badakshan with an Afghan escort, and had crossed the Murghab and paid them a visit; he had treated them liberally, asked them many questions, and they had the pleasantest recollections of him. They mentioned that he used to stand in a stooping position with his coat over his head for a long time. I subsequently ascertained that the person described was Mr. Ney Elias, and I found that throughout Roshan the people had always tales to tell of his kindness and liberality. The Aksakal presented me with some eggs,

which were a welcome change of diet, and a sheep; he also obtained some flour, and barley for the ponies, as ours was exhausted. I was told that the Mimbashi, who was the titular chieftain of the upper part of the Roshan valley, lived at Roshar, five miles below, and proposed calling on me early the next day, if I would stay and rest. As we were all of us tired out, dogs and ponies included, we were glad to accept this invitation, and I turned in early and slept without interruption until I was awakened by Kallick, who apprised me that the Mimbashi had arrived. Looking out of my tent, I saw him having a conversation with my men as he waited for me to receive him. As soon as I was dressed I had him into my tent and gave him tea and a cigarette, which he appeared to appreciate. He seemed well informed and intelligent, had been to Petersburg for the Tsar's coronation, which he seemed to have greatly enjoyed, and wore a number of decorations on the breast of his dark blue frock coat, which he wore with loose white trousers, a Kabul puggaree, and Russian boots. He was a good-looking, athletic young man, with well-cut features, sunburnt complexion, and piercing black eyes. He wore his head shaved, and round his waist was a black leather belt with silver fittings, while on his coat and waistcoat were brass buttons bearing the mark of a German firm.

"A VERY ROUGH STAIRCASE HAD BEEN MADE"

I asked the Mimbashi for information respecting the road that lay before me to the Oxus, for he had assured me that it would be impossible for me to obtain sufficient supplies to enable my party to reach British or Chinese territory again short of Kala-i-Wamar; and it would be quite impossible for us to cross the Alichur Pamir by the Marchenai Pass, for that was still deep under snow, and would not be open for another month at least. This was bad news, as I had relied on this pass being open; and once on the Alichur the way back to India was plain sailing. I also learnt that the road down the river to Kala-i-Wamar was impracticable for animals, and that the only Russian officer who had ever attempted to reach the Oxus by this route in summer time had lost all his ponies by their falling over precipices. He strongly advised me to give up the project; but I told him that the fact that others had failed made me all the keener on making the attempt, and finding that the physical difficulties of the road would not deter me he tried another course. Had I a passport? Did I know there was a Bokhariot guard at Kala-i-Wamar, and that unless the Russian officer at Charog had sent orders that I was to be allowed to pass, I should certainly be detained? In reply to this remonstrance I exhibited my permit, written in Russian and in Turki and signed by Baron Wrewsky, the Governor-General of Turkestan, authorising me to travel in the Pamir district. And having carefully inspected this, he said that it would smooth all difficulties, and promptly gave up attempting to dissuade me, and, like the good fellow he was, set about helping me in every possible way.

Shur Chor the Mimbashi had no particular cause to be fond of the Russians, for it appeared that some time previously both he and his father had been suspected by the Commandant at Murghabi of forwarding reports of Russian movements to the British Government, and on the strength of this suspicion alone they had both spent some time in the Murghabi gaol. Shur Chor told me that he remembered the visit of the Feringhi to Upper Roshan. The Afghan Subhadar had, however, warned the natives not to give him more assistance than they could help, telling them that the Feringhes were all bad men. So the

Tajiks had not seen so much of the Englishman as they would have liked to do. The natives of Roshan are polyglot in their accomplishments; among themselves they speak a peculiar dialect of their own. They could, however, all of them speak Wakhi, and the great majority understand Persian, even if they do not speak it. The Tajiks are a very superstitious people, and were eager to discover what occult influence I exercised on

SHUR CHOR, THE MIMBASHI OF ROSHAN

the weather so as to make it cool and cloudy and suitable for my journey. They were all aware that Feringhis had the power of influencing the elements. I told them that the Feringhis were a race of magicians and could do anything they please.

I noticed that many of the Tajiks wore the same coloured garments as those I had seen in Hunza, but their personality differed from that of any natives I had yet met. These upland Pamir valleys from Wakhan to Karetegin are occupied by Aryan agricultural tribes, who were originally driven to the highlands when the lowlands were overrun by the nomads of

the north-east. The treaty concluded between Russia and England in 1873 includes a large part of their territory in the Afghan States, but a mere paper demarcation cannot prevent Russian influence from making itself felt more and more in these regions, which are cut off from Afghanistan proper by the Hindu Kush, and which belong physically and ethnically to the Aralo-Caspian basin. Although commonly known as Tartary, or Turkestan, this portion of the Asiatic continent is not exclusively occupied by peoples of Turki stock, and it is probable that the original population was Aryan. According to political vicissitudes, the cultured agricultural nations and the pastoral steppe tribes each prevailed in their turn. The Aryan race in Turkestan is now represented by the Tajiks, kinsmen of those who, under the name of Sates, dwell on the opposite side of the Caspian. The word Tajik means crowned, and points to the race having held a political supremacy. In some districts they call themselves Parsivan—that is, Persians—and they are really Iranians, differing but slightly from those of Persia, and speaking a language affected in the slightest degree by Turki, Arabic, or Mongol elements.

The Tajiks have long heads with high brow, expressive eyes shaded by dark eyebrows, finely chiselled nose, florid complexion, and full brown hair and beard. They form the intellectual aristocracy of Turkestan; but beneath their exterior culture they inherit many social vices, notably avarice, rapacity, a love of gambling, and licentiousness.

The Gulchas are the agricultural highlanders who inhabit the western slopes of the Pamirs in Darwaz, Roshan, Shignan, Wakhan, and Badakshan, and are also Iranian stock, but of a purer type. The chiefs claim descent from Alexander. They have broad heads, delicate features, and firm lips. De Ujfalvy chronicles having met some closely resembling the Celtic peasantry of Savoy. They compare favourably with the Sarts and Tajiks on account of their simple habits and upright character; hospitality is a sacred duty with them, and every village contains a house reserved for strangers; no slavery is tolerated among them, and polygamy, though authorised, is

rare. Traces of an old world fire-worship exist among this people. Lights must not be blown out, torches are kept burning round the cradle of the newly born and the couch of the dying, and towers are still to be found standing along the banks of the Panja which are attributed to fire-worshippers. The Gulchas are, however, extremely poor and inclined to be avaricious. They build their houses of mud and stone, leaving a hole in the centre of a roof to serve the purposes of a chimney, and they use their outer rooms as stables. The Gulchas are a small race, averaging from 5 ft. 5 in. to 5 ft. 8 in.; they are well made but not particularly muscular. They are tractable and good tempered, and particularly fond of merry-making, and they consider husbandry the only honourable employment. The women are fairly good-looking, but fade while still young. The girls are, as a rule, married between the ages of ten and fourteen, and wives are regarded as the absolute property of the husband and his heirs. On a man's death his brother can claim his widows, but no widow can marry again without the consent of her husband's heirs. The husband possesses the right to divorce his wife, and this is somewhat wantonly exercised. Cases of infidelity are exceedingly common, yet, strange to say, the men, unlike other Mahommedans, are not as a rule jealous. Infanticide is not considered a crime.

MY CARAVAN RECROSSING A GLACIER

CHAPTER VII

ALONG THE BARTANG TO KALA-I-WAMAR

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breath ; a monstrous sight !
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
With splash and shock into the deep.

SHELLEY.

A NASTY CORNER—MY SERVANT ON A PRECIPICE

CHAPTER VII

ALONG THE BARTANG TO KALA-I-WAMAR

How the natives cross the river—Roshor—A dangerous path—The fable of Hazrat Ali—A narrow escape—The Tajiks—Sur Panj—Barghoo—Yaims—Arrival at Kala-i-Wamar—My reception.

It was a fine clear morning as we turned our backs on Tashkurgan, and, accompanied by the Mimbashi, followed the river down to Roshor. There are two roads, of which we chose that along the river bank, while the ponies took the one going more inland. My companion was mounted on a fine Badakshi stallion, which annoyed me considerably by its constant neighing, but which was so remarkably sure-footed as to evoke my admiration. Our road lay along the side of a cliff flanking the right bank of the Murghab, along which I preferred to walk, as the path was very precipitous and covered with boulders. The Mimbashi offered to dismount and walk with me, but I would not allow this, and so he reined in and I walked by his side. We passed the small hamlet Nassure on the opposite side of the river, whence there is a road which leads

to Sarez in five days. The Aksakal came over from the village on a mussock, or inflated goat-skin, to pay his respects as we went by, and I watched him with considerable interest as he made the passage, for the river ran strongly, and it required very careful steering to avoid the sunken rocks.

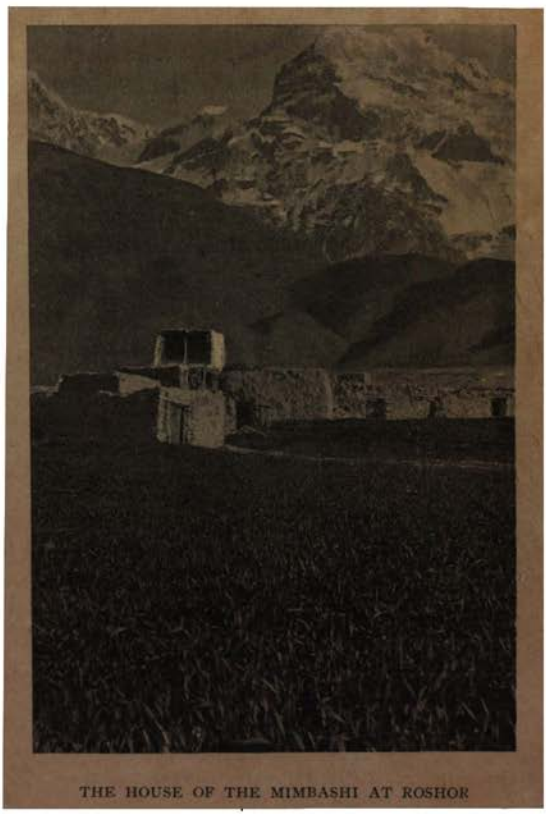
Roshor, where the Mimbashi's house was situated, is five miles from Tashkurgan, on a plateau of some extent, and contains about fifty houses, standing in the midst of cultivated fields. At the back of the village there is a road which leads through the Yezgelon nullah to the Khurjin-Ok Bar Pass, and thence to Darwaz. It is, however, only practicable in summer.

The Mimbashi put me up in his house, which closely resembled those I had seen in Hunza; it was built of mud and stones, and raised platforms on either side of the mud oven provided sleeping places for the inmates. The beams supporting the roof and sides of the house were very massive, and seemingly of great age, and I could not help speculating where they had come from, as so far as I knew there was no timber of any size in the vicinity. We rested here a day, while Shur Chor collected men to carry our baggage, for beyond this point the road was said to be impracticable for laden ponies, and I was told that it was extremely questionable whether unladen ponies would be able to get along. It is remarkable that Roshor village contains no trees of any kind, and the glare and heat in the summer must be intense. I noticed a small group of about ten houses which goes by the name Yupchun, 1000 feet below the plateau on the river bank. Shur Chor prepared a great treat for me in the form of half a dozen eggs, which he managed to collect, and I welcomed the gift as a rare luxury, as I had not tasted an egg for many weeks. Unfortunately they turned out to be antiquarian specimens of such great age that the yolks had turned to a substance closely resembling pith.

The necessary coolies having been obtained, we continued our journey along a path which took us across the plateau to the edge of a very narrow and steep defile leading to the river. At the top of this we unloaded the ponies, and handed

"THE ASCENT WAS VERY STEEP"

the baggage to the coolies, who carried it to the bottom by a track which traversed the side of the nullah by zig-zags, and the ponies followed, each animal assisted by two men until all were safely at the bottom. The main danger of the passage was incurred by those who descended first, some of them having narrow escapes from the big stones which, on being dislodged by the ponies following, came crashing down the steep bank and disappeared into the river below. From the river bank the ponies were sent inland over a barren steep *col*, while Shur Chor and I found our way over some rickety ladders fixed in the precipitous path, which provided a road I did not relish, for a single false step would have meant a flight into eternity. After safely surmounting several precipices, we rejoined the ponies, and shortly afterwards came to a tomb which was said by the natives to be that of the brothers Hassein and Hussein, sons of Hazrat Ali the Prophet. Kallick impressed on me that this patriarch and his sons were identical with some of the prophets of our Bible, since Hazrat Ali took his sons out into a big plain to sacrifice them to God, but the knife would not cut. Yet when he tried it on a stone he cut the stone in two. God made him undergo this trial to test his devotion, and afterwards



THE HOUSE OF THE MIMBASHI AT ROSHOR

he became a very great prophet. According to the Tajiks both sons met their death in a battle with the Feringhis, whose leader was also killed. The tomb which is said to contain their remains is surrounded by a circle of stones, inside which the position of the bodies is indicated. They are said to have

"UP THE MOUNTAIN SIDE"

been of great stature, no less indeed than thirty feet in height. Kallick, who lives in Leh, told me that the Buddhists in Ladakh still worship an image twenty yards high, which they affirm portrays the exact dimensions of a sacred child eight years of age. The tomb was evidently regarded as a very holy one, and each of the Tajiks as he went by touched one of the stones and then stroked his beard. Kallick and my servants did the same.

The road beyond this point became worse than ever. The ponies continued on a path high up the mountain side while we followed on a track low down by the water's edge. Several

very awkward places had to be passed in which the ladders fixed along the face of the precipice had worked loose, and creaked and swayed ominously as we scaled them. Towards evening the sky became overcast, and a storm burst upon us, amid a tempestuous wind which surpassed anything I had previously seen. Great masses of rock were dislodged from the mountain side and hurled into the torrent below. The air became filled with clouds of sand and dust, which prevented our seeing a yard away. We were fortunate in finding shelter in a small cave, which afforded protection from the hail of stones which were flying about in all directions, and after remaining imprisoned for upwards of an hour, the storm passed away and we emerged from our place of shelter unhurt.

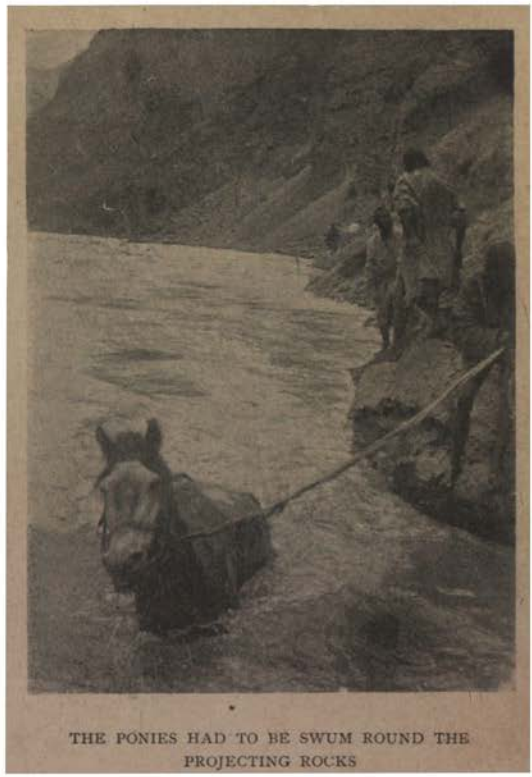
We decided to pass the night where we were, as it was too late to attempt the crossing of the Indoof Jehr, a precipitous spur which blocked our way immediately in front. We accordingly set about pitching camp, and while thus engaged saw two Tajiks coming along the road from Kala-i-Wamar, who told us that the Bokhariots were engaged in building a new fort at that place, and that all the men in Roshor had been requisitioned to collect material. They also said that the road in front of me was execrable, and I should probably have the greatest difficulty in obtaining men to carry my goods. This report was the more annoying, as the Bartang was in a state of flood, and far too full for the ponies to swim without danger. It therefore seemed imperative to reduce my baggage to the smallest possible dimensions, and so I set about facing the unpleasant necessity, and devoted the evening to giving away everything I could possibly dispense with. The Tajiks appreciated this performance highly, but were greatly disappointed at my refusal to give them some poisonous photographic chemicals, which they assured me were truly wonderful medicines. Having thus disposed of the bulk of my worldly goods, I turned in late and rose before dawn, as the natives had warned me that the next day's journey was the worst on the road. A party of my men went off early to smooth difficulties, and when we arrived at the foot of the spur we could see them still hard at work above us. The ascent

was very sheer, and though the Tajiks had scraped some narrow zig-zags in the mountain side, the turns were very awkward to negotiate, and there was not sufficient room for the ponies to turn. In consequence there was a constant dislodgement of stones on to the heads of those below, and one man got his cheek cut open by a falling flint. Altogether, it was the most difficult bit of road I have ever known safely traversed by ponies, and I congratulated myself when we eventually all reached the summit in safety. One animal did slip, and fell a considerable distance, but was saved by a rock, and was eventually dragged back to the path in safety. We were very lucky to have had no accidents, for it was at this point that General Unif, the last Russian who attempted to make the passage of the Bartang with ponies, had the misfortune to lose all his animals. The Tajiks told me that the general took his loss very well, and clapped his hands as each pony fell, as though he considered it rather a joke. The ponies were of course paid for by the Government, but the general lost all his baggage, and he evidently considered that he had had enough of the Bartang defile, as he turned back from this point.

Descending to the river once more, we found that the water had risen so much as to cover the track, and the ponies had to be swum round projecting rocks by the aid of long ropes, while the men scrambled like cats along the cliffs to keep up with them. I noted a narrow entrance through the mountains on the opposite side of the river, which led, I was informed, up to the Bardera nullah, through which there is a way to Shighnan. There was a small village of some fifteen houses at the entrance to this pass. From here the path descended to Chadud, a hamlet surrounded by a narrow strip of cultivation along the mountain side, where we found some rafts made of inflated goat-skins tied together waiting to convey us to the other side. The river is at this point about 150 yards in width, and runs like a millrace. At one end of each raft were two large skins, on which Tajiks stripped naked, mounted, and lying flat on their stomachs, propelled the raft across the stream by kicking out vigorously with their feet. The water in the centre

"BY KICKING OUT VIGOROUSLY WITH THEIR FEET"

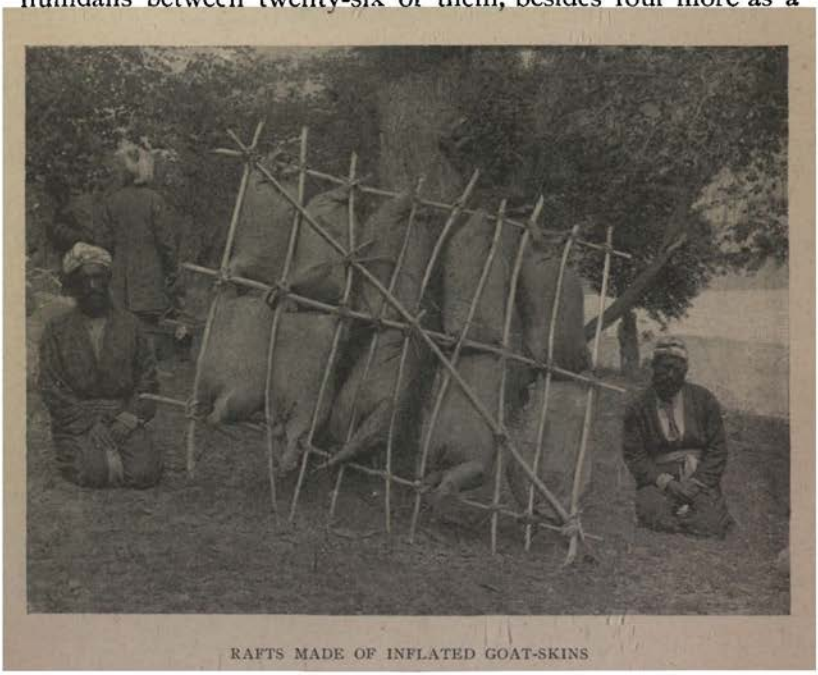
broke in great waves, which threatened to wash us overboard, but the men proved themselves so skilful, and managed the raft so dexterously, steering round the partially submerged rocks with unerring judgment, that we duly reached the left bank in safety, though each raft had been carried some distance down stream in its passage. The ponies were also swum over in safety by dint of the Tajiks' efforts, and we were all very glad to load up again and continue our way as far as Baseed, a pretty little village three miles below, where I pitched my tent in a charming orchard under some walnut trees. There had been a serious famine in the country the previous year, and there was still considerable scarcity, especially in the case of flour, of which only the richer Tajiks and the Aksakals of the villages had left any at all. The poorer natives appeared to subsist on roots and grass, and occasionally small supplies of curds were obtained by them from the upland pastures at the heads of the valleys. The whole of Roshor is now greatly impoverished, owing to the extortion practised by the Afghans during their occupation of the country, and to the failure of the crops in 1897.



THE PONIES HAD TO BE SWUM ROUND THE PROJECTING ROCKS

The Aksakal of Baseed was a very obliging man, and volunteered to provide me with coolies. I accordingly dis-

missed my Roshor men, and was amused at the surprise with which they received my announcement that I intended paying them for their services. On hearing this they petitioned me to pay them in numdahs, in preference to coin for which they had no use. They had worked so hard and carried my baggage safely in such impossible places, that I gave them nine numdahs between twenty-six of them, besides four more as a



RAFTS MADE OF INFLATED GOAT-SKINS

baksheesh; they were highly delighted, and salaamed their farewells with exuberance. I learnt that both Russian and Bokharan money are in circulation in Roshor, but that Chinese silver is practically unknown, and has no specific value in the appreciation of the people, who only accepted what I had on my assuring them that the coins were really silver, and therefore had a value.

The Mimbashi Shur Chor had now arrived at the limit of the country under his jurisdiction, and begged my leave to return. He had been of the greatest possible service to me, and I felt considerable regret in parting from him. I pre-

sented him with a pony which had been cut about a good bit by the rocks while swimming over the river and needed rest, and we bade farewell with mutual expressions of goodwill; he leaving me in the hands of the Aksakal of Baseed who promised to conduct me safely to Wamar. Just before starting I tried to get a photograph of some women, but they proved so shy that nothing came of it.

BRIDGE OVER THE BARTANG

A short distance below Baseed there is a bridge over the Bartang on the cantilever principle. The way in which the natives build these bridges is both simple and ingenious. They select a point where the defile is narrow, and there are projecting rocks convenient to the ends of the bridge. They then dig out a hole in the river bank sufficiently high to avoid the danger of flood. In this hole they then place the end of a long log of wood and surround it with enormous rocks on the embedded end to keep it firm, and so they continue on either side of the river, each length protruding beyond the one below until they eventually meet and are bound together.

The path by the right bank being the shorter, the men carrying the baggage crossed the bridge while I kept on to the left with the ponies, and found that the path improved, there being few difficult places until we reached a point some two miles below the bridge, where the mountain side descends sheer into the river, and a path, composed of birch twigs tied together and suspended by binders from rocks above, afforded the only means of progression. Shingle and earth had been laid over the twigs, and the path thus provided was good enough in itself. The weight of a dozen ponies traversing it, however, proved too much for some of the binders holding it up, which did not appear as though they had been renewed for years. I had stayed behind to pick some flowers, and seeing that the ponies had crossed in safety had no thought of danger as I hurried on after them. I had gone just halfway across when to my consternation I heard the binder above me snap and instantly felt the path giving way beneath my feet. I clutched desperately at some roots growing in the side of the rock as the path fell into the water below with a sickening thud. The noise of the torrent as it tore along below me was so great that I feared that there was little chance of my being heard, but I shouted for help with all my might. Luckily one of my men and two Tajiks were behind me, and immediately they perceived the danger of my situation they scaled the cliffs above me like cats and taking off their turbans threw the ends down to me. I seized the ends firmly and having wound them well round my wrists I trusted to the men above and swung off into mid-air. It was a distinctly perilous position, one of the nastiest I remember. We had still twenty yards to go and I feared that it was practically impossible for the men above me to find a firm foothold and support my weight of ten stone. I looked below me and made up my mind to try and gain a footing on a projecting rock some distance down if the worst came and they let me fall; but they didn't. They held on like grim death, and occasionally as they worked their way along I eased the tension by thrusting my fingers and toes into crevices in the rock and thus we gradually reached the path again in safety. The whole incident had not occupied more than five minutes,

but to me it had seemed an age, and when the acute tension was over I felt that all my strength had deserted me and that I was too weak to move. But I soon pulled myself together, and we all sat down, the men and I, and I formally thanked them for saving my life at the peril of their own, which the brave fellows acknowledged by seizing my hands and laying them on their foreheads, vowing that I was their lord and master and that their lives were at my disposal.

"THE ONLY MEANS OF PROGRESSION"

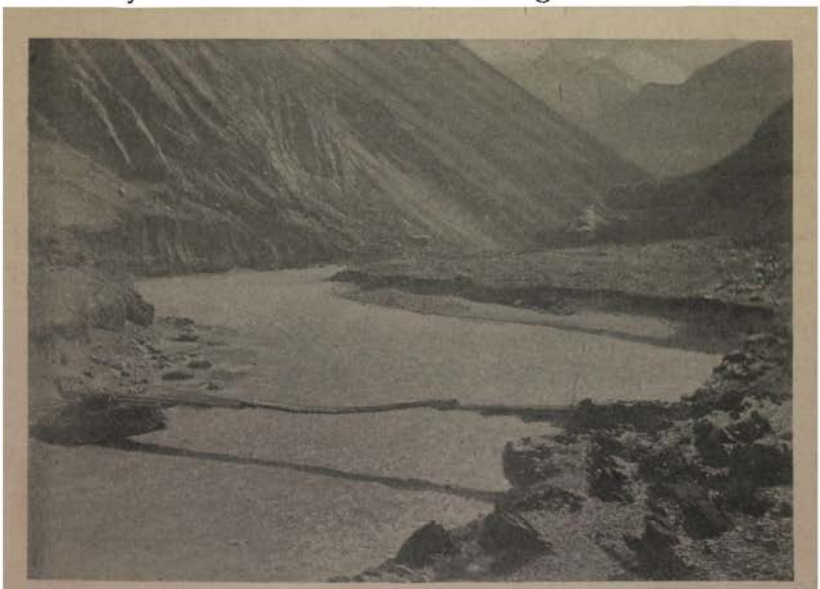
The blind confidence and implicit trust that a native will place in an Englishman who treats him well is an astonishing and most pleasing fact, and the incident above recorded is only one of many with which I am acquainted, in which these people have without a second thought risked their lives for the Sahib whose bread they are eating.

The heat in this narrow defile was extreme, owing to the radiation from the expanse of bare rocks and arid hillsides, and we were glad to get to Addgerch six miles beyond, where a small green oasis had sprung up on the deposit brought down by a mountain torrent. The oasis comprised quite a luxuriant patch of green, with fruit trees growing out

of the long grass, and whilst we sat down by a cool rivulet I bathed my blistered feet and hands while Tilai Bai produced some barley-bread he had procured. An hour's rest in this oasis, spent on our backs in the long cool grass decked wit flo ers and sheltered from the sun's fierce rays by spreading fruit trees, thoroughly restored us, and we set out vastly refreshed and crossed the river on a raft to Razouge, a village on the right bank, where the valley widens out and the Bartang divides into a number of channels, all of which are fordable. The village contains some thirty houses, and is picturesquely situated on a gentle slope leading to the river, behind which rise towering granite cliffs like a steep wall, with summits which seem to overhang the place and threaten it with destruction. Some of the Tajiks of Razouge had visited Chitral, whither they had fled when the Russians first occupied these valleys, and they seem to be much impressed by the conditions under which the Chitralis live since they have come under the protection of the British Raj. The scene at night was one of surpassing beauty. The effect of the bright moonlight playing on the snow-clad mountains, while it revealed the details of the rocks and lit up the umbrageous surroundings of the village, was so entrancingly beautiful that I had my bed carried out of my tent and lay in the open gazing at the picture until sleep dimmed my senses in oblivion.

Our marches through the Bartang defile had been short ones, but the difficulties we encountered were such as to necessitate slow progress. Our normal rate of speed during this section of my journey was about half a mile an hour, the numerous delays brought about by the frequent crossings of the river tending to make the journey wearisome in the extreme. Six miles lower down we came to the prosperous village of Sur Panj, round which there is a considerable amount of cultivation. A crowd of villagers soon gathered to see what the Feringhi was like, and I noticed that their costume differed from those worn higher up river. The men wore turbans and long coats of cotton material, confined at the waist by a long kummerbund, and

loose cotton trousers. They wore boots of soft leather, and the Aksakal sported a silken scarf. One of the villagers came and conversed with me in Hindustani, which he had learnt during a two years' sojourn in Kashmir. The people were all most civil and anxious to please, though when they learnt that I was ready to pay for what was provided they certainly tried to get all they could out of me. From Sur Panj we crossed a cantilever bridge to the left bank



THE BARTANG RIVER

and shortly passed the entrance of Rai Shah Vitch Hoof nullah, leading to the Darwaz; and lower down on the same bank is a small village of six houses called Oosow. Four miles below Sur Panj we recrossed to the right bank, after which we had some trouble in traversing the great volume of water which poured from the Rugmede nullah, a short distance up which there is a considerable village.

Outside Pyderood the Aksakal met us and escorted us to the village, where we spent the night. The situation was a fine one

at a considerable height above the river. The slope was well wooded and the view delightful. From here to Barghoo, four miles away, took us the whole of the next morning, the road being the worst we had traversed. The ponies had to swim the river several times, and I nearly met with an accident which would have effectually brought my travels to an end. We came to a deep rift in the face of a precipice, over which a single log had been laid, this being held firm in its place between large stones. Several coolies had crossed in safety, and when it came to my turn I straddled the log and had got half way over when the large stone holding it in its place on the further side began to oscillate and finally rolled down the precipice, while the beam with its rounded ends began to turn and roll towards the edge. Fortunately the cries of the men behind me attracted the attention of a coolie, who ran to the log and held it secure till I had crossed. Probably I should in any case have managed to scramble over in time, but the feeling of being seated on a rolling log some hundreds of feet above a raging torrent is not calculated to soothe the nerves of the coolest.

On arrival at Barghoo we were met by an Aksakal sent by the Bokhariot Beg in charge at Kala-i-Wamar to greet me and offer assistance. He seemed anxious to know all about my doings, and I did my best to satisfy him. He subsequently sent a *résumé* of what I told him to Wamar, and insisted in providing all my requirements at the Beg's expense, explaining that he did so at his master's express command. Accordingly he gave orders for a sheep to be killed, and sent for as much bread as we could eat. He also told me that the Beg would make all the necessary arrangements for my journey so long as I was in Bokharan territory, which he told me extended up the Panjah as far as Langar Kisht, opposite the Afghan fort of Kala Panj. The next day Kallick and I embarked on a raft on which we glided pleasantly and rapidly down the Bartang, which here is a wide river and runs more smoothly and with fewer sunken rocks. We stopped at Yaims, where the Aksakal offered me rich cream and a kind of sweet cake made from white mulberries dried

and beaten into flour and then mixed with butter, which I greatly appreciated.

Yaims is the scene of the most recent skirmish between the Russians and the Afghans. After the fight at Somatash on the Alichur Pamir in 1892, when the Afghans were outnumbered and without exception shot down, they retired from the Pamirs to the inaccessible valleys of Shighnan and Roshan, where they still maintained small garrisons, but the following year

MEETING OF YAIMS WITH THE EMISSARY OF THE BOKHARAN BEG

two Russian expeditions simultaneously descended the Ghund Daria and the Bartang. In Shighnan the Afghans offered no opposition, and hastily crossed the Panja to their fort at Kala Bar Panj, but in Roshan the Russian expedition, which was quite a small one, comprising only fifteen men and one officer, tempted the Afghan commander at Yaims, who had twenty sepoys, to hold the village against the Russians, who were eventually made to retire across the mountains into Darwaz, whence they had come. The Afghans continued to hold Yaims, and foreseeing that the Russians would probably shortly return with a larger and better equipped expedition, they made the most of their time in getting all they could out of the Tajiks, who state that when the Afghans eventually left the valley for

good, the natives had been reduced to severe straits for the necessaries of life by the extortion practised on them, whilst there was not a chaste woman to be found among their daughters.

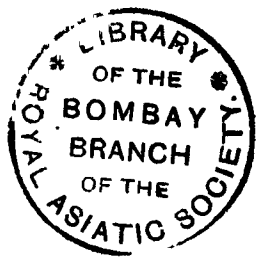
Resuming our raft journey we glided down stream, and presently on rounding a rather sharp bend came in full view of the mountains of Badakshan, which stood out like a great rampart, a trusty line of defence for our Afghan ally. They appeared very beautiful in the bright sunlight, and looked so close as to appear to rise steeply from the river bank. At this point we were hailed by a gorgeous Usbeg official from Wamar, clad in finest Bokharan silks and wearing a spotless turban. He had, he said, been sent to meet me by his august master, Mir Ishan Kul Beg, who was in charge of the district. A rich carpet had been spread for me under some shady trees, and I went ashore and conversed. The Usbeg spared no pains to be attentive to me, and tried to tempt me with all sorts of dainty dishes, which I did not require. He kept inquiring after my appetite and pressing me to partake, and seemed unable to believe my statement that I was not hungry. He told me that his work consisted of eating, drinking and sleeping, and that nothing more was required of a man of position in Bokhara. He seemed greatly astonished when I told him that I never ate more than three times a day, and replied that in his country great men ate as often as food was put before them, so that their stomachs were always full and heavy.

My reception over, we mounted our ponies and proceeded at a good pace to Wamar through a long stretch of cultivated land, with occasional mud houses. As we advanced our following was increased by the arrival of minor satellites from the fort, who, dressed in costumes of Bokharan and Khokandian silks, with belts highly ornamented with silver, joined the cavalcade as we went along. After a mile or so we finally emerged from the Bartang defile, and saw the mighty Oxus stretching before us from north to south in a broad silver line. A few miles further on and we arrived at the fort of Kala-i-Wamar, outside which a crowd of natives had

assembled to look at me, and I was ushered in through the main entrance between a guard of honour drawn up in two lines, at the end of which was an open summer-house, where the Beg, with two chiefs of lesser importance, sat waiting to receive me.

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER ON PAROLE



There's a danger even where fish are caught
  To those who a wetting fear;
And what's worth having must aye be bought,
And sport's like life and life's like sport
  "It ain't all skittles and beer."

LINDSEY GORDON.

KALA-I-WAMAR, WHERE I WAS ARRESTED

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER ON PAROLE

Usbeg hospitality—My arrival reported at Charog—"Batchas"—I desire to proceed—Delays—A prisoner—I write to Charog—Send Tilai Bai back to Gilgit—My enforced detention—I am watched—Arrival of Kevekiss—I return with him to Charog—The Russian headquarters fort—My treatment—Political discussions—Visit to Bar Panj—A Russian critic on British Policy—Excursions—Marched to the Frontier.

THE Beg received me most kindly, and plied me with questions about my adventures as we sat down to a most excellent dinner of boiled meats and stews, Russian tinned fish, hard-boiled eggs, with sweets and fruit. There was also plenty of champagne, made in Tashkend, unlimited vodka and cigarettes. I told the Beg of my misfortunes on the Pamirs, and asked his permission to travel through Bokharan territory along the Oxus as far as the Hindu Kush. He replied that he would gladly give me the permission I asked, but that he must first ask leave of the Russian officer at Charog, some fifty miles further up the

Panja, whom, he told me, he had already informed of my impending arrival. Throughout the interview the Bokhariots struck me as being very pleasant and well-disposed towards me. They told me that a tent had been pitched for my accommodation alongside the summer-house, but on inspecting it I thought I would prefer to have my own tent pitched in a little grove of poplars underneath the walls.

Kallick, who had been interpreting, told them that he was an Afghan, and that he had fought against the English in the last war, when he had been wounded in the leg. This news evidently impressed them, and they began to treat him with marked consideration. Needless to say there was not a particle of truth in these statements. During the pitching of our camp we were the centre of attraction for a large and curious crowd, and I had to ask the Aksakal, who had been deputed by the Beg to look after my requirements, to make the people move away. In the evening the Beg sent me an excellent dish of pilau, which I greatly enjoyed, and after dinner I was invited to witness a dance of "Batchas" in the Beg's rooms. It was a monotonous performance. The "Batchas" are little boys who have been trained to dance, and who work themselves into a frenzy of excitement to the accompaniment of barbaric music. When one boy becomes exhausted another takes his place, and so the performance is prolonged indefinitely. They are selected for their good looks. The Bokhariots prefer their "Batchas" to the charms of their wives; and every personage of importance considers his household incomplete without the presence of some of these black-eyed little boys.

The next morning I called on the Beg, and told him I should like to start for Charog to interview the Russian officer in command as soon as possible. He appeared rather discountenanced by my request, and begged me to delay my departure for a week so as to rest myself after the fatigues of my journey. The other Begs also pressed me to remain, so not wishing to hurt their feelings I consented. The next day the Beg came to see me and promised that he would give orders for a raft to be got ready to enable me to cross the Bartang and start for Charog. We accordingly struck camp

and packed our baggage ready to make a move, and we waited all day for news of the raft without receiving any. In the evening I was informed that sufficient goat-skins to form a raft had not been collected, but that it would shortly be ready. There was nothing for it but to pitch camp again, which we did, and in the morning received a message from the Beg that the raft had been completed late the previous night, but had been accidentally swept away.

I now began to suspect that there was some hitch in granting me leave to go to Charog, and neither Kallick nor I were the least surprised when an invitation came from the Beg asking me to go to the fort to see him. Accordingly we repaired to the fort, and were conducted to the reception-chamber, where we found the Beg seated in state surrounded by his officers, and with a large number of armed men in attendance. We were courteously received, and spoke about everything excepting the point I wished to discuss—*i.e.*, when was I to be allowed to continue my journey? At last I asked him point blank what was meant by all the tales of insufficiency of the supply of goat-skins and the story of the raft being swept away. And then the Beg confessed that he had received orders from the Russian Nechelvnik at Charog that I was not to be allowed to proceed till he sent orders to that effect. On this I showed my passport, which the Beg examined and pronounced to be in perfect order, and he advised me to write to the Nechelvnik myself, stating my intentions and enclosing my passport. I thought this advice good and followed it, writing in French, and explaining the causes which had led to my leaving the Pamirs, and requesting leave to proceed. I handed the letter to the Beg, who promised to forward it without delay, and was astonished on returning to my camp to find a number of Tajiks talking to my men and stating that they had come to take my luggage inside the fort. I immediately returned to the Beg to remonstrate with him about this high-handed procedure, but he replied that the Afghan Tajiks from across the Oxus were noted thieves, and he could not allow me to run any risks by sleeping outside the walls now that I had been placed in his charge. I subsequently learnt that he had some grounds

for his action, and that only a short while before a Bokhariot who had pitched his camp outside had his throat cut and his property looted during the night by Tajiks over the water, who cross and re-cross on mussocks with the greatest ease.

An answer to my letter arrived from Charog three days later. The Russian officer expressed his regret at my detention, but informed me that circumstances had obliged him to arrest me and to keep me at Kala-i-Wamar until he received the permission of the Governor of Ferghana authorising me to pass. He added that he could not ask me to come to Charog, but would himself pay me a visit at Wamar in a few days' time. The contents of this letter seemed to me to be extraordinary, inasmuch as the Governor of Ferghana is subordinate to the Governor-General of Turkestan, whose permission to travel in the Pamir region I had forwarded in my letter.

Finding myself in a hole I set to work considering the possibilities of my position with a view of discounting the future. I saw that endless complications might arise in the near future, and that any precautionary measures possible should be taken forthwith. I knew that the greatest possible latitude is accorded to Russian frontier officers by their superiors, and recognised that my position, which was at present highly inconvenient, might at any moment become serious. I therefore decided to send Tilai Bai back to Gilgit with a letter to the political agent there, explaining my position to him, and requesting him to wire to the Indian Government at Simla the circumstances of my arrest while travelling with an official passport. Tilai Bai gladly undertook the commission, notwithstanding the fact that its execution involved considerable risk, as had the letter been found on him he would have unquestionably fared badly.

There being no likelihood of my getting on for some days, I passed the time in conversation with the youngest of the three Begs, whose name I found was Abdul. He paid me several visits every day, was exceedingly good-natured, and having been a great traveller was full of information. He had returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca by Bombay and Kabul, and had visited Delhi and other Indian cities, the magnificence

of which had greatly impressed him. He assured me that the Bokhariots detested the Afghans and their ruler, and that the Tajiks along the Oxus had been ruined by the extortion practised by Abdurrahman's agents, from which they would take some years to recover. He also told me that the Amir had recently issued an order prohibiting the export of grain and horses from Badakshan, and that trade was at a standstill owing to the exorbitant duties imposed along the Afghan frontier, which practically killed commerce.

We took many walks together along the banks of the Panja and explored the fort, which is a massive building of mud and stones, square in shape, and covering a considerable area. It is placed on the bank of the Oxus some four miles below the junction of the Bartang with the Panja, and has a tower at each corner. The Tajiks say that it was built by Abdurrheem, a former Khan of Kala Bar Panj. Inside are two principal courtyards, with buildings along the sides. The Beg's apartments are situated in the centre of the fort, comprising three large rooms, the outer one looking over the river. I saw no women about, though the spectacle of a servant preparing dried rose leaves in a bowl suggested their presence. The garden and orchard were delightful, teeming with flowers of various kinds and fruit, and providing plenty of shade. In the garden I noticed a prisoner at work, who was, I learnt, a Tajik from the Afghan side, who had been caught attempting to steal a pony. With the aid of Kallick I interviewed the man, and gathered that he had done fourteen years' military service at Kala Bar Panj, and had been repeatedly employed by the Afghan commander to cross the river and steal. He had always been successful on these errands until he came after this particular pony, and his detection had brought about an entire change in his fortunes. There seems to be a very large amount of stealing across the frontier. The Afghans constantly cross the river and get away with Cossacks' rifles and other desirable property; and the repeated remonstrances which have been addressed by the Bokhariots to the Afghan Subhadar in command have not produced any result. The views obtainable from the fort were very picturesque,

and afforded a vista of some twelve miles down the silvery Oxus.

The crops mostly favoured in this country are lucerne and clover, which flourish in great abundance, and are said to be indigenous. The people all wore turbans of Peshawur make, and I noticed several dogs of unmistakably English origin, which had probably been brought into the country by Badakshi traders, who had as likely as not obtained them from Pathan thieves in Peshawur. I noticed also quite a number of fine stallions, one of which I used to ride every morning along a stretch of grass by the river; but the animal was an unbroken one, and not a comfortable mount. While at Kala-i-Wamar I visited several of the Tajiks' houses, and found the women extremely shy, so much so that they generally bolted when they saw me coming. The children, however, were very friendly, and I noticed that many of them had grey and some blue eyes. Fair hair was not at all uncommon, and I noticed red hair once or twice. There is, however, no doubt that the Cossack garrison till recently stationed here have left their mark upon the people.

One day I rode up the river bank as far as the junction of the Bartang with the Panja. At the point of juncture the former river has a bed half a mile in width, though at the time of my visit the actual width of the stream was not more than 200 yards. The water is muddy and of a reddish colour, and the current rapid but smooth. The Panjah is, if anything, rather wider, but the water is of the ordinary glacier colour. There is, so far as I can judge, little difference in the volume of the two rivers.

The Bokharidts struck me as being extremely religious. The Mullah called the inmates of the fort to prayer every morning at dawn, and the three Begs went to the river twice every day, where their prayer carpets were laid on the bank, and the Mullah, standing in front of them, would cry out in strident tones—

Allah ho Akbar, Allah ho Akbar,
Arsh haddoo unlah Illah ha Illalah
Arsh haddoo unnah Mahomeda Razul Allah

Hya Allah Sallah
Hya Allah Phallah
Allah ho Akbar, Allah ho Akbar.*

The ceremonial was always attended by a crowd of retainers, and the brilliant sunshine, the gay silks of the Bokhariots, the green turf, and the mighty river which flowed by beneath its snow-capped walls, all helped to build up a picture calculated to impress itself upon the recollection of even the most impassive spectator. The historian regarding such a spectacle would be plunged into a sea of recollection. The scenes that have been enacted on the banks of the mighty Oxus are multifarious; indeed, one conjures up visions of mighty conquerors who have founded dynasties, which in turn have been vanquished by mightier men; of Alexander and his conquering Greeks; of the Chinese, the Arabs, the Mongols, and now the Muscovite. What tales of bloody wars and countless battles could not the Oxus unfold had it the gift of speech!

I was rather amused to notice that two of the Aksakals had evidently been told off to watch my movements and keep me in sight wherever I went. One of my chief sources of information was a middle-aged Tajik who could talk Hindustani, and I had frequent conversations with him. I learnt from him that there was a rich deposit of iron ore a short distance below Wamar. It was this man who obtained for me several specimens of the Tazi breed of dog, which I subsequently took back to India; and what with his agreeable companionship and the civility of the Begs, the pleasant climate and the brilliant weather, I had very little to complain of in regard to my enforced detention. My one trouble was caused by the flies, which swarmed in the court in myriads. It was, indeed, impossible to eat anything without the plate being covered by a black mass of them; and I was quite powerless, as I had brought no mosquito nets with me. One day I noticed that there were various preparations being made, and I learnt that

* God is Great,
God is Great,
There is no God but God.
God has sent us Mahomed as his prophet.

the Russian Nechelvnik together with the doctor from Charog were expected on the morrow. This was good news to me, as I longed to hold converse with a European. Early the next morning the Begs, mounted on their Badakshi stallions, dressed out in richly embroidered silken clothes, and appointments heavily pointed with silver, rode out through the gateway to

CAPTAIN KEVEKISS, THE RUSSIAN OFFICER WHO HAD ME ARRESTED

greet the Russians, and about midday they returned escorting two Russian officers, who were followed by half a dozen Cossacks. Shortly afterwards I received a message from the Nechelvnik saying that he would shortly come and see me. So I sent him an invitation for himself and his companion to sup with me. Later in the afternoon they came, and were both as pleasant as could be.

The Nechelvnik I found was not a Russian by birth but a Swede. His name was Kevekiss, and he had been ten years in the Russian service. He was a handsome man, about thirty years of age, with blue eyes and fair hair. He came straight to

the point and explained the reason for my enforced detention. He told me that in the preceding April he had received notice to the effect that I had been given permission to travel on the Pamir and that I might be expected at any time. A month ago, however, he had received a telegram by special messenger from Osh, informing him that my previous permission had been cancelled, that it was not known whether I had yet reached the Pamir plateau, but that I was to be detained wherever found, pending the receipt of orders from the Governor of Ferghana for my disposal. The whole business seemed a mystery, and Kevekiss expressed himself unable to explain the circumstances, which he admitted were very unusual.

I pondered a good deal over the facts above narrated, and suddenly recalled the action of the Russian Consul-General at Kashgar, who had appeared adverse to my scheme of visiting the Pamirs, and had enlarged on the necessity of obtaining a fresh passport by reason of the change of governor in Turkestan. I put the case to Kevekiss, but he assured me that he was not aware whether Petrovsky had made any representations respecting me or no; though he admitted having heard that he was apt to be very suspicious respecting travellers. It then occurred to me that there was another cause which might have influenced the authorities, this being the insurrection in Ferghana, of which Kevekiss gave me news. It seemed that the Mussulmans had risen in several places and had murdered a number of Russian soldiers, and their Mullahs were now preaching a religious war. It was, however, very unlikely that the insurrection would spread, as the natives were badly armed and there were plenty of troops on the spot to deal with them.

My Russian guests were rather surprised at the supper which Kallick prepared for them that evening. I still possessed some tinned fish, a *ptâté de foie gras*, and a single bottle of port wine. Kallick made some excellent soup, and gave us mutton-chops, chicken, curry, and cherry tart and cream, so we didn't do badly. After supper we became very friendly, and Kevekiss told me he was extremely sorry to be obliged to detain me at

Wamar. He also expressed his regret at not being able to take me back with him to Charog, but he dared not take the responsibility. He told me that the first news the Russians received of my presence on the Pamirs had been brought by the Kirghiz from Karakul to Murghabi, and the lieutenant in charge there had at once despatched a party of Cossacks to detain me, at the same time sending the information on to Kevekiss at Charog. The Cossacks had followed me from Karakul to Tashkurgan, but had been prevented from following me down the Bartang defile by the difficult nature of the road. They had therefore turned back at Tashkurgan and retraced their steps to Murghabi. I remarked that it seemed to me curious that they had not overtaken me, for I had stayed a day or two on the way to shoot; but Kevekiss replied that the Kirghiz had been slow in reporting my arrival, and that they would suffer for it. I also learnt that the Tajiks, as well as the Kirghiz, had forwarded reports to Murghabi, stating that I was busy taking observations, drawing maps, and obtaining all information possible from the natives, and that I had given myself out to be a Russian official on duty. On hearing this I pointed to my ragged suit, my stained hat, and shabby boots and puttees, and asked Kevekiss whether he thought that my appearance, as a whole, justified my being described as one of his compatriots, and he was obliged to own that it did not. I then explained to him that I was not travelling on any business whatever, but was only visiting the Pamirs in quest of sport, and finally I asked him to do his best to procure me permission to follow the course of the Panja up towards Chitral. He promised to use his efforts to this end, and expressed himself as perfectly satisfied that I was not the spy he had been led to suppose by the reports received.

The Russians came to see me again the following morning, and Kevekiss said that on thinking the matter over he had decided to give me the option of either accompanying him to Charog, or of remaining with the Bokhariots at Wamar. But he warned me that, in the event of my accepting his first suggestion, I must pledge him my word not to take any photographs. I gladly gave the required pledge, and closed with the

offer to go to Charog. An Aksakal then came over to my camp and took an inventory of my belongings and the names and description of my servants. Tilai Bai had gone, and I hoped was now safely on his way to Gilgit, though I had no idea by what road he intended to travel. I was the more glad of this, as Kevekiss had refused my request to send a letter to Tashkurgan in Sarikol, saying that he had no orders to allow me to communicate with any one.

My servants were very glad when I told them we were going to move on. They declared they were heartily tired of an inactive life, and eagerly began shoeing the ponies and making ready for the start. The Cossacks, however, did not seem so anxious to return, and came in a body to Kevekiss and petitioned him to give them one more day at Wamar, which was granted. I ascertained that these men had previously been quartered at Wamar, and had made many acquaintances among the fair ladies of the place whom they were loth to leave. I also gathered that the women of Charog were few and far between and mostly ugly. The idea of a sergeant in a British regiment approaching his officer gravely at the salute and making a similar request struck me as being irresistibly comic, but the Russians did not seem to notice anything peculiar in the incident.

The Bokhariots gave us a tremendous spread before we left, and many complimentary speeches were made. They appeared to be very much on their guard before the Nechelvnik and generally much in awe of the suzerain power he represents, for which, I take it, they have no strong affection. The second Beg, Kevekiss told me, was a "Marram," his business being to watch his chief closely and send minute reports of what he was doing to Bokhara. It is the custom to attach a "Marram" to every Bokhariot official in an independent position, to act as a spy over his doings, a procedure which, according to my way of thinking, must place the chief in a very anomalous position. Kevekiss had no great liking for this "Marram," who, he said, had been guilty of many mean actions, and he cited, as an example, that when some time previously he had had occasion to threaten to report him unfavourably to the

Russian authorities he had offered him his wife to make it up.

The following morning we left Kala-i-Wamar, after bidding a formal farewell to the Bokhariots, who had been extremely kind to me. We crossed the Bartang on rafts, which were waiting for us, and the ponies were swum over without mishap. I was surprised to see the rough manner in which the Russian officers travelled, a single fly tent, in bad repair, sufficed for their covering, camp furniture was practically non-existent, and they both slept on the ground in valises.

About four miles above the junction the river narrows and flows between high banks. The natives call the place Darband, and here there is a fine old tower perched on a lofty rock, with precipitous sides, which overhangs the Panja. Darband was formerly the frontier between Roshan and Shignan. Continuing, the path crossed the entrance to several small nullahs, from which easily fordable streams issue on their way to join the Panja. The bridle path is for the most part easy going, passing through several small villages, surrounded by waving cornfields and prolific orchards of mulberry, apricot and walnut trees. We met a fair number of Tajiks on the way, who respectfully saluted the Russians as they passed. Most of them seemed very poor, and they all wore small tight-fitting skull caps.

We stopped at Sacharb and had some food in the middle of the day, resting afterwards under a fine apricot tree, on which the fruit was already formed. At this point the Panja passes through a fine gorge, and the current runs in great waves over some rocks, whose tops protrude. The path then ascends a barren spur by zigzags. At a small village called Peshnev, four miles beyond Sacharb, the valley of the Oxus widens out as the hills on the Afghan side retreat. Numerous villages are dotted about the plain thus formed, and in the distance can be seen the fort, Bar Panj, standing high on some whitish-coloured rocks, with a village nestling below amidst the fruit trees and gardens. We continued along the river bank, passing opposite the Afghan fortress, and two miles further on reached the Russian fort of Charog, thirty-five miles from Kala-i-Wamar. I

received a hearty welcome from the Russian officers of the fort, and the Cossacks appeared to take a great interest in my arrival. The post lies a short distance below the junction of the Suchan with the Panja, and stands about a mile from the latter's bank. It is strongly built of clay, wood and stones, and the earthworks are of great thickness. The fort was laid out under the direction of Kevekiss, who certainly deserved great credit for his work, considering the means at his disposal and the lack of skilled labour. The garrison consisted of four officers and about fifty Cossacks, and there were two Maxim guns mounted on the earthworks facing the river, as a warning to the Afghans of what might be expected if trouble arose.

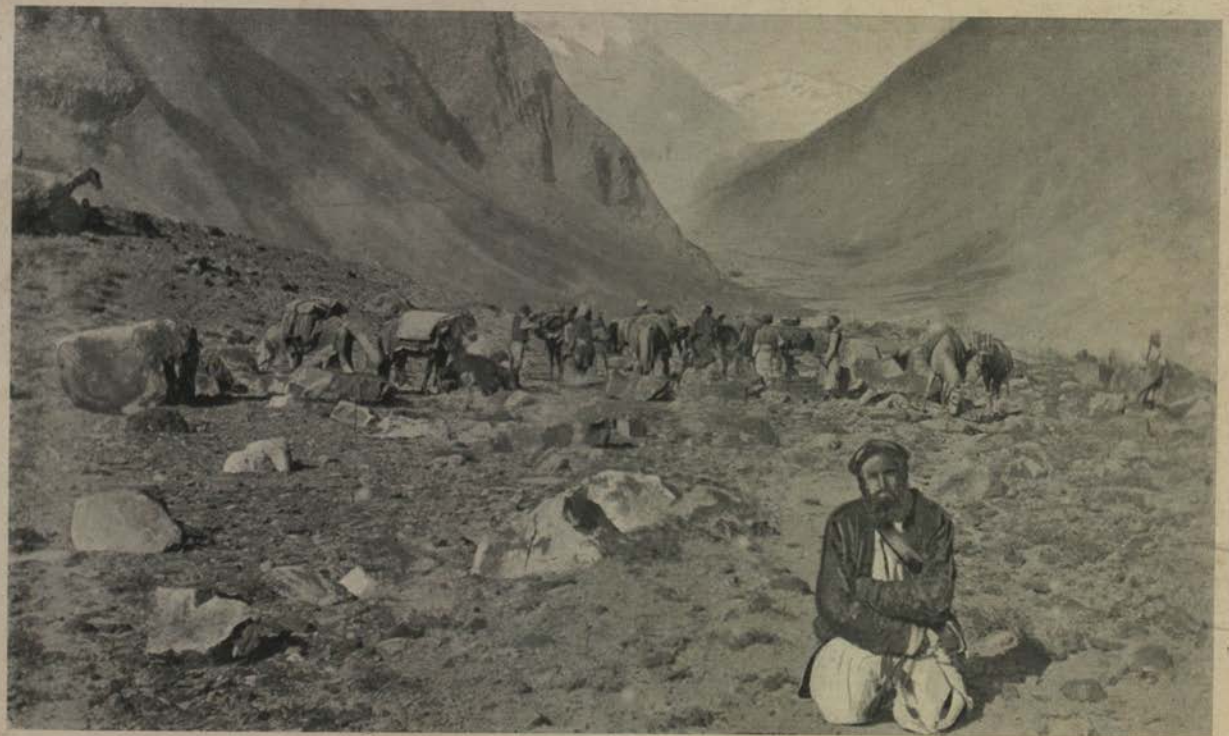
Kevekiss put me up in his own rooms, which were extremely comfortable. I learnt with some surprise that his wife had been at Charog with him, having only recently departed on a visit to Marghilan. At the time of our arrival the garrison was in straits for supplies, as the annual caravan from Osh, on which they relied, had been delayed somewhere, and they were out of vodka and brandy, which they found inconvenient. I spent several pleasant days here, and found my hosts a most genial set of men, who appeared unaffectedly glad to meet an Englishman, and discussed politics with me daily. They were particularly anxious to know if I thought there would soon be war, and if I knew whether the Afghans were going to construct a fort at Ishkashim, as they had heard rumoured? When did I think the Amir would die? I was especially struck at the excellent information they possessed respecting frontier questions, and was astonished at their knowledge of Indian politics. This I put down as being due to the extensive system of espionage which is encouraged by the Russian Government along the Indian frontier. The measures taken with a view to keeping themselves posted as to events in Afghanistan are very thorough. Trusty men in disguise are constantly coming and going between the Russian frontier, Kabul and Chitral, and these are encouraged to gain all the information possible compatible with their own safety. This policy is of course directly opposed to that favoured by the British Government, and it is curious that while Russia does all she can to encourage individual

enterprise in the form of travel and exploration among her military men, and awards honours for the results of their efforts, our Government do all in their power to discourage the efforts of its officers to add to our store of knowledge, and put all possible difficulties in the way of travellers and sportsmen who desire to visit the countries about the frontier.

The Russian officers all look forward to war with the greatest eagerness. They have of course nothing to lose and everything to gain. Their pay is insignificant, they are most of them deeply in debt, and their prospect of advancement in time of peace is *nil.* In the event of war advancement comes within the reach of all employed.

The Russian doctor was especially outspoken in his opinions. The natural frontier of Russia in Asia was, he said, the Hindu Kush, and Russia would never rest until she reached that barrier. Beluchistan, he urged, was an independent country, and Russia had every right to seize it if she wished. Persia was being rapidly Russianised, and we should soon see the Persian Gulf brought under the rule of the Tsar. As to the possibility of England successfully resisting the progress of Russia, he protested that such an idea was absurd. The British had less than 100,000 white troops in India, who were pampered and lacked physique. No native army could, he said, make a stand against the Cossacks, and besides this the native army was wanting in loyalty, and that was why so many British officers had been killed in the recent Afridi war while endeavouring to get their men to follow them. I gathered that the Russians have a very poor opinion of the Afghans, though possibly this is because they have never met them in equal numbers.

I went out one day after ibex with Kevekiss, and we shot two small bucks, and he was very much impressed with the performance of my Mannlicher rifle, which he begged me to sell him, but with which I could not see my way to part. While at Charog it occurred to me that it would be very interesting if I could obtain permission to pay a visit to the Afghan post at Bar Panj. I broached the subject to Kevekiss, and somewhat to my surprise he offered no objection, and told his clerk to write a letter in Persian to the Ressiddar, Gholam Hyder, the



ON THE WAY TO CHAROG LEAVING KALA-I-WAMAR

commander, to the effect that there was an Englishman at Charog who was anxious to come over and pay his respects. Later in the day I received a reply to the effect that I might come, and Kallick and I promptly set out and crossed the river. We were received by a number of Afghans, who conducted us to the fort, which I found to be a large square building, with high walls, some 200 yards long on either side, constructed of clay and stone. We were conducted through an outer court-yard to an inner building, where the commander had his private quarters. The windows were all latticed and afforded a fine view over the river towards Charog. Gholam Hyder was seated on some cushions, but rose to greet me, and was extremely civil. He told me that he had once been to Peshawur, and had also visited Chitral, and could talk a little Hindustani. With this and Kallick's aid we got on very well, and set about discussing politics. He said that he could not understand the policy of the British Government in permitting the Russians to occupy the Pamirs, which unquestionably belonged to China and to Afghanistan. He asked me to explain how it was that we had not demanded reparation for the affair at Somatash, and for that which had preceded it at Penjdeh? Were the English afraid of the Russians? The Afghans, he said, would most certainly support us against the Russians, who were pigs, and could never treat a native two days alike. The Ressiddar was very anxious as to the whereabouts of Lord Roberts, of whom he had a great opinion, and whom he regarded as a truly great man. He also offered to give me a safe escort to Chitral and a letter to the commander at Kala Panj, if I wished to proceed that way. He would, he said, send a raft for me across the river at night, and I could bring my baggage over. It was a novel experience my sitting on the balcony at Bar Panj with its commander. Gholam Hyder was communicative, and had a great faculty for putting questions, especially with regard to military matters, and he told me many stories respecting the country and its people, some of which would not bear repeating. One anecdote he related respecting the amours of the Russian officer in command of the post at Langar Kisht, opposite Kala Panj. The officer in question had persuaded the

wife of an Afghan to leave her husband at Kala Panj and take up her quarters with him, where she remained some weeks. One fine morning the lady returned without warning to her husband, who, being in receipt of a weekly stipend by way of consolation from her new protector, was not overjoyed at the apparition. He promptly demanded her reason for having returned, and was told indignantly that it was because the Russian pig would not give her a pair of red trousers. I thought this story too good to be wasted, and repeated it to Kevekiss on my return, and he told me that it was undoubtedly true, and that the unfortunate Cossack officer had sent far and wide, half over the Pamirs in fact, in the hopes of procuring the garment required by his sweetheart, but had been unable to obtain them in time to prevent her leaving him.

Of the Afridis the Afghan had not a good word to say, and he gave it as his opinion that the proper course for the British Government to have taken would have been to have treated them as his master, the Amir, had treated the Hazaras some years before. Gholam Hyder told me that he had been at Kabul when a great English lord had visited his august master a few years ago (I assume that he meant the present Viceroy of India). Of the Bokhariots he had the very lowest opinion, regarding them as the merest puppets in the hands of the Russians, and individually contemptible. After having partaken of tea and sweetmeats I asked permission to look over the fort, which was at once accorded. The fort has five towers, on which are mounted some obsolete cannon commanding the valley both ways. The garrison consists of about a hundred men, most of them Tajiks, but with a sprinkling of pure Pathans among them, these being quite unmistakable on account of the proud bearing they displayed as they moved about in their flowing white garments. Their arms were of a very miscellaneous description, comprising Enfields, Sniders, Martinis, and one or two magazine rifles with the Kabul mark. Some of the garrison were dressed in khaki, and wore brown leather belts bearing the names of some of our native regiments, these having probably been stolen in Peshawur. The accoutrements were, however, very badly looked after, and many articles

THE RUSSIAN GARRISON AT CHAROG

were coated with rust; the men, moreover, were mostly slovenly and untidy in their appearance.

After inspecting the fort I bade farewell to the Ressiddar, who again pressed me to transport my belongings over the river, and after taking a hearty farewell of the Afghans we returned to Charog, where I found the Russians exceedingly curious as to my interview, for they hold no communication with the Afghan garrison.

The next day I made an excursion up the Suchan River and into the valleys behind Charog, and I learnt that in the winter time numbers of snow-leopards are to be found hereabouts, and I was shown some good skins. The days being varied by shooting excursions, river trips, and long rides, while the evenings were spent in Kevekiss's company discussing politics and listening to his forecasts of impending war.

Thus the time passed pleasantly enough, and, so far as my personal convenience was concerned, my "imprisonment" might be regarded as a restful holiday. Still, no tidings came from headquarters, and I remained a prisoner on parole at Charog. On the expiration of my third week's domicile Kevekiss told me that, although he had received no answer to the letter he had sent to Marghilan, he had so satisfied himself as to my *bona fides*, that he felt justified in permitting me to return to the Chinese frontier *viâ* the Bartang valley, if I so desired. I did not hesitate about accepting this offer, for I had had enough of the Oxus valley, and longed to find myself once more among the refinements of civilisation. I accordingly arranged to quit Charog as soon as I could complete my arrangements. I was, however, rather in a hole, for I had no money left. I had calculated on returning to India across the Hindu Kush, and had only brought sufficient with me to meet the needs of that journey. The road down the terrible Bartang defile had considerably impoverished me, and now, after having been detained for nearly three whole weeks, I had to set out on an extended return journey. I decided, therefore, to sell everything I could spare, and held an auction, which realised a sum of fifty roubles. I parted from Kevekiss with great regret, which was, I believe,

mutual. It had really been a great pleasure to make the acquaintance of so charming a man in such an out-of-the-way corner of the earth, and I was greatly indebted to him for many acts of kindness which tended to make my stay at Charog a pleasant one. Nor did our friendship end with my departure, as we subsequently corresponded, and I was gratified on reaching Kashmir to find a copy of his photograph waiting my arrival.

A PIECE OF THE ROAD BELOW ROSHAN

We retraced our steps to Kala-i-Wamar, where I stopped a while, and did a deal with Ishun Kul Beg, who was anxious to purchase my ponies, and I thus added to the small store of cash available for my journey. Kevekiss had sent three Cossacks, who were to escort me to the frontier and help me on the way, and it was just as well, as without their aid I doubt whether I should ever have got across the Pamirs. The Tajiks' Aksakals, who had assisted me on my outward journey, had been punished by the Russians, and I found their demeanour very different to what it had been. The good nature which I had experienced before was no longer exhibited before me. One and all refused me supplies. Coolies were unobtainable, and the Cossacks had to compel the people to carry my loads by a free use of their whips. To render my

progress the more difficult I found that the Bartang had risen considerably since I had traversed it, and the path along the defile was now more execrable than before. Fortunately I had sold nearly everything I had possessed, and my remaining worldly possessions consisted of my rifles and a few rounds of ammunition, which one or two men sufficed to carry. Such were the conditions under which I set out to traverse one of the vilest roads in Asia.

CHAPTER IX

A MARCH FOR FREEDOM

And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;
Till in the vale of Cachmire, far within
Its loneliest dell,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs.

SHELLEY.

CAMP ON GREAT KARAKUL LAKE

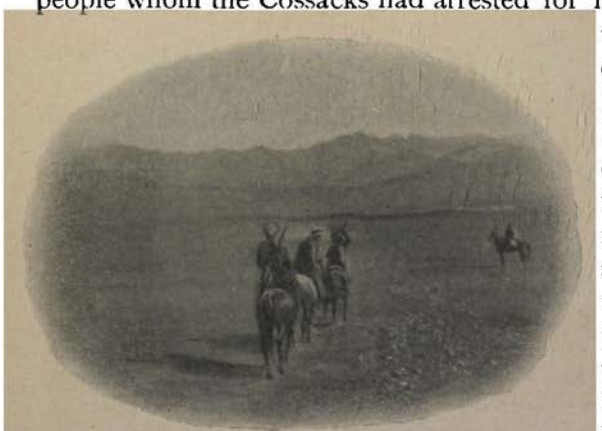
CHAPTER IX

A MARCH FOR FREEDOM

Altered conduct of Kirghiz towards me—The cause—My Cossacks—I learn the cause of my arrest—The revolt in Ferghana—Across the Pamirs—The Chinese Frontier—Free once more—Impending trouble with the Chinese—Rescued by Sher Mahomed—Tashkurgan—Set out for Hunza—The Source of the Oxus—The Mintaka Pass—British soil again.

AT the head of the Bartang we were met by my old friend Shur Chor. The poor fellow had been summoned to Murghabi, and appeared to have had an unpleasant interview with the Russian commander there. He told me that Gholam Hyder, the Ressiddar who had shown me the way from the Chinese frontier, had been seized by Cossacks and taken to Marghilan, to explain his conduct in having dared to guide an Englishman without an order from the authorities. His family were in great distress, as the Cossacks had compelled them to give up the money I had given him, and had also seized all their sheep. The people were therefore in actual want of food. I did what I could to help them, and wrote to the Governor of Ferghana from Karakul explaining that Gholam Hyder was innocent of blame, as were also the Tajiks in Roshan, inasmuch

as I had exhibited to them my permit to travel on the Russian Pamirs, in which all Russian subjects were enjoined to assist me. These people would therefore have been culpable if they had refused me aid. As I went through Karakul I noticed that the Kirghiz, who were there on my previous visit, had been changed, and learnt that they had been included among the people whom the Cossacks had arrested for having helped me without a specific order from the Pamir authorities. My Cossack escort appeared to take it all as a matter of course, and one of the men said that plenty of people were sent to Siberia for less heinous offences. The journey, though less encumbered by baggage than before, proved an extremely arduous one, and it was with a feeling of relief that I reached the top of the Kara Art Pass, 16,000 feet, on July 7. Here we crossed the Chinese frontier, and my escort bade me farewell.



MY ESCORT BADE ME FAREWELL

The Cossacks had been very useful during the journey, and I rewarded them to the extent of my means. I had been greatly impressed by the conduct of these men, who appeared cheerful and contented under the greatest trials, and endured all sorts of hardships without complaining. They had no tent and no flour, and eked out their existence on what they could get. They were in no sense well cared for, and as often as not half-starved; yet they always seemed fit and sound, and appeared to be thoroughly hardy and able to stand any rough work they might be called upon to do. Individually they were undersized but thickset, averaging about five feet six inches in height, fair in complexion, and distinctly European in

appearance. Some of them might have been taken for English agricultural labourers. They were clothed in khaki jackets, tight pantaloons, and high boots reaching above the knee. Over these they wore a long brown or grey overcoat. Their arms consisted of a repeating-rifle and a sword, and altogether they impressed me as being fit to go anywhere and to do anything.

The summit of the Kara Art consists of a broad plateau

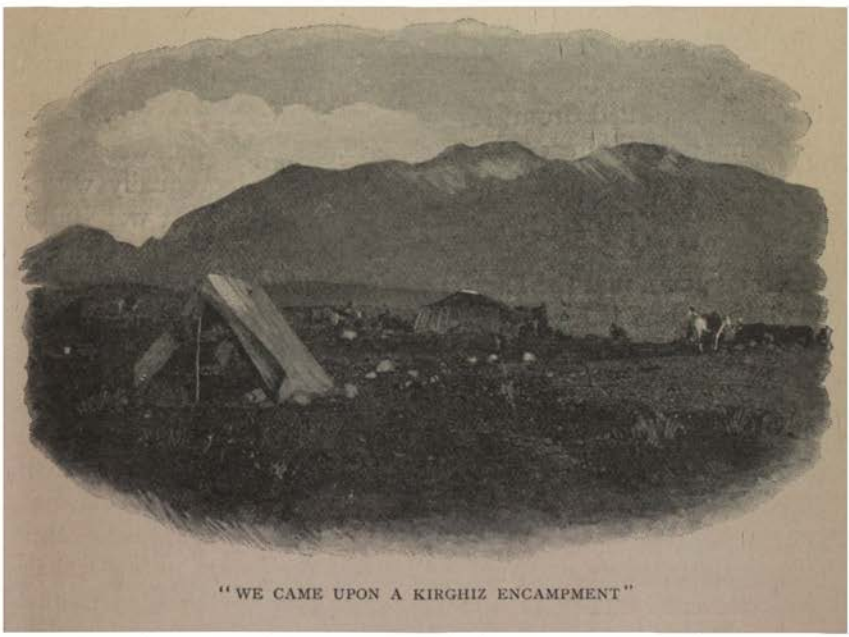
THE SUMMIT OF THE KARA ART PASS

covered with débris, among which a number of deep snow-drifts still remained unaltered. We experienced some difficulty in traversing these, but after several fatiguing hours we reached the valley at the foot of the pass just as the sun was sinking behind us. It was with a sense of considerable relief that I realised the fact that we were in safety once again. So long as we remained within the limits of Russian territory I had never felt secure, for I knew that we might at any moment be overtaken by a party of Cossacks with orders to stop us and convey us to Marghilan. This would have necessitated a long and weary march over the Alai, and probably end in my being

sent back to Europe by rail. Kevekiss had indeed warned me that he quite expected this would be the sequel to my adventures, and he had given instructions to my Cossack escort to stop any djiggitt we might meet on the road and open any official letter coming from Marghilan. So I had never felt free from doubt until the frontier was reached, and now that we once more stood on Chinese soil, I felt I was in safety again, and free from any further annoyance. I confess that at this part of my journey I felt particularly radiant, for I had successfully accomplished an object on which I had long set my heart. I had realised my ambition to visit the mighty Oxus in that part of its course which is quite unknown to Englishmen. I had crossed the district of Roshan and visited the unknown region of Shighnan, which had been closed to Europeans ever since they had fallen under Muscovite dominion. I had crossed the Panja and visited the outermost stronghold of Afghan power at Kala Bar Panja, and I had seen the inside of the two most outlying Russian strongholds in innermost Asia, and I realised that the hardships I had met with had not been endured in vain.

I took a last look at the pass and then we started off down the nullah in search of a sheltered nook in which to lay our rugs and rest. The tent had been sold with the rest of the things, and we retained only the barest necessaries for our actual requirements, but despite the lack of comforts and notwithstanding my fatigue, for we had come nearly thirty miles, I could not help being impressed by the marvellous beauty of the surroundings. The sun had set, but the moon was nearly full, and there was not a cloud in the sky. The amphitheatre of snowy mountains which was spread out around us gave an indescribable solemnity to the scene. The air was still and very clear, and the rays of the moon caused the snow-peaked mountains to glisten in the stillness and produce the effect of an enchanting fairy scene, such as overcame our fatigue and enervated our senses with a joyousness we had not felt for some time as we pushed down the valley in search of a resting-place. About eleven o'clock we reached a stretch of ground under the lee of some rocks which was quite free from snow.

Here we halted for the night. We made a fire and cooked some beef tea, and ate some biscuits with it. And then we wrapped ourselves in our sheepskin coats and lay down and slept as if nothing would ever wake us. At daybreak we were on our feet again and, failing to find anything wherewith to make a fire, had to start without breakfast. About ten o'clock, however, we came upon a Kirghiz encampment where we were



"WE CAME UPON A KIRGHIZ ENCAMPMENT"

made welcome, and here we decided to rest a day and draw up plans.

At this period the Kirghiz were in a great state of excitement about the revolt in Ferghana. Numbers of nomads had fled from the Alai region into Chinese territory, notwithstanding the fact that the Russian authorities had stationed Cossacks at every known pass to prevent all persons coming or going without a passport. But these people care nothing for passports or guards, and in a night will cross a range of mountains that no European would dream of attempting. It is, indeed, practically impossible to put any restrictions on the Kirghiz, for they invariably succeed in evading them. The tales that these fugitives

brought with them were truly sensational. They stated that the Mullah had achieved great successes, and that thousands of Russians had been killed. The Cossack bullets had been turned aside by the prayers of the faithful and the Prophet had blunted their swords. The Mahomedans had, it was said, armed themselves with staves of wood, which in their hands had proved more than a match for the swords of the Russians. The Amir of Kabul had promised his assistance. The Kirghiz from the steppes were collecting to strengthen his hand. A British force had crossed the Hindu Kush and seized Aktash and the Russians had fled from Murghabi. The British and the Mussulman were already uniting and would rapidly sweep the Russians into the sea. These and many other equally wild rumours were flying about, and all the Kirghiz I met were full of warlike ardour. But it soon subsided when the truth became known that the Russians had killed five hundred Sarts outright in one battle, that the holy Mullah and all the ringleaders had been captured and would promptly be shot, and the whole country would at once be placed under military law.

The terrible road along the Bartang valley had worn the soles of my boots until the bare skin of my feet became exposed, and I had to hobble along on my toes or my heels to keep the balls of my feet from the sharp stones and the rocky surface of the country I was traversing. At Kolpootch, a former camping ground, I found the same lot of Kirghiz who had been so hospitable before, and from them I hired ponies to carry me and my belongings. One of the Kirghiz agreed to accompany me as far as Tashkurgan so as to bring the animals back again. We all travelled together as far as Moja, where I parted from the others to try and shoot some *Ovis Poli*. The ponies went on towards Sarikol, whilst I and two Kirghiz from Moja ascended the Oi-Balgin nullah, where *Poli* were reported to be numerous. This story, however, proved to be a myth, so I decided to cross the Oi-Balgin Pass and try down to Rangkul which lake I reached in three days. Skirting the northern side of the lake, which teemed with waterfowl, we encamped at the old Russian fort, where we found a number of Kirghiz, for the Russians abandoned this post some time ago and have now no station

nearer than Murghabi. I found the nomads rather suspicious of me, and noticed that one of them mounted a horse and galloped off in the direction of Murghabi, doubtless with the object of informing the officer there of my presence; so I deemed it wise not to loiter in the neighbourhood and, turning in a southerly direction, ascended the Burulik stream and crossed the pass of the same name, eventually descending to the Kashagil River which joins the Aksu six miles lower down. I followed this up as far as the Berdish Pass, which I crossed and arrived on the Tagharma Plain eight days after leaving Moja. All the passes I crossed on this journey were easy, as is generally the case at this time of year. I do not dwell in any detail on Rangkul, as it and the adjacent country are so well known that it would be difficult to add anything to what has been already written on the subject.

At Tagharma there is a Chinese outpost, at which I nearly had a fracas with the Chinese. Judging from the direction whence I came that I must be a Russian they sent word to my camp that I must hand over my papers to be forwarded to Tashkurgan for inspection before I could be allowed to pass. This would have meant a delay of at least two days, which I had no desire to undergo, as beyond coarse bread I had no provision of any kind with me, nor had I any money. So I took no notice and started to ride past the outpost, trusting that I should not be interfered with. I was, however, promptly undeceived, and saw some twenty Chinese Sepoys and about double that number of Sarikolis, all armed to the teeth, riding towards me. I also spied a second party hurrying after them, and was greatly relieved as the two cavalcades came upon me together to find the Munshi Sher Mahomed was with the second party. He had heard from the Amban at Tashkurgan that a great man was approaching from the Russian side, and knowing how suspicious the Chinese were of any one attempting to cross the frontier after having had dealings with the Russians, he had hurried on to see if by any chance it might be me. He arrived just in the nick of time, for the Chinese would certainly have stopped me at any cost and I should probably have had a bad time. I was, of course, overjoyed to meet the

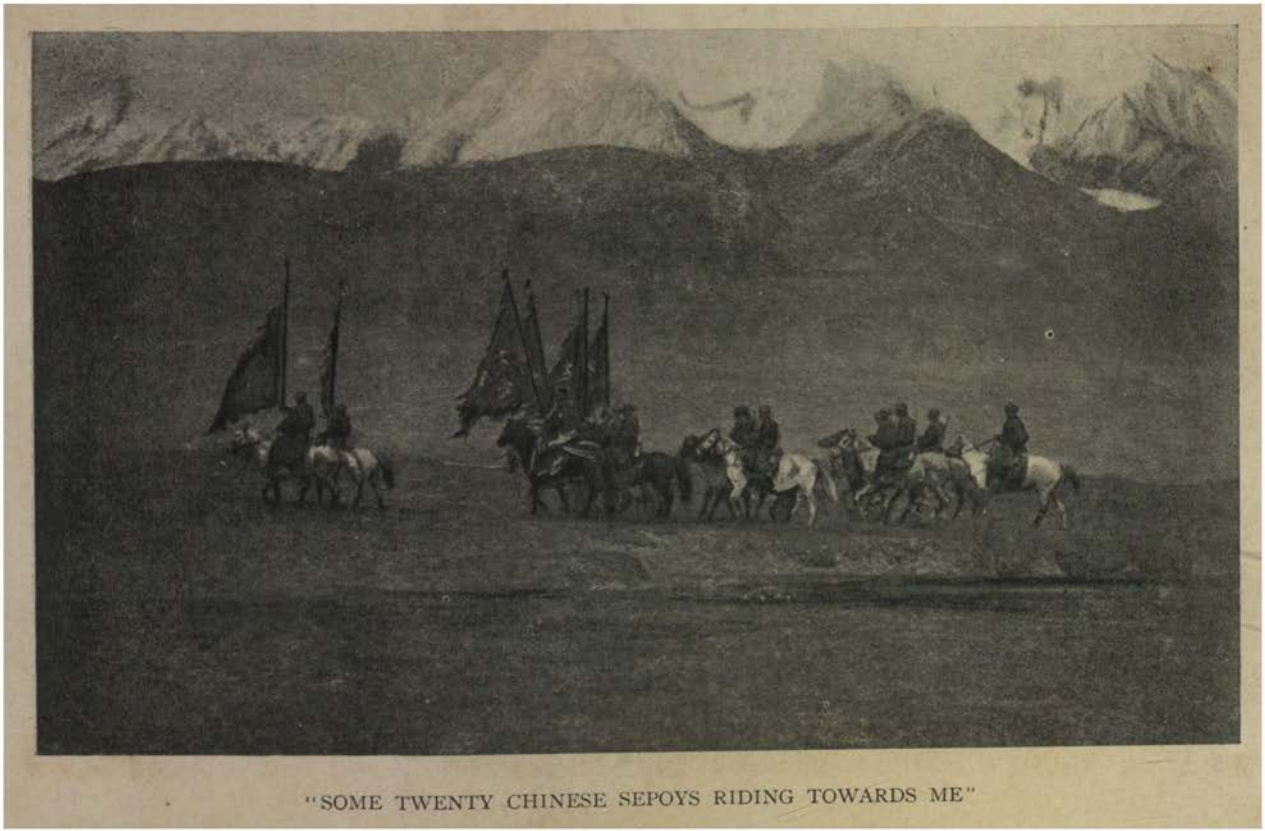
Munshi again, and to be able to converse with a fellow creature in my own language once more. He told me that Tilai Bai had duly arrived at Tashkurgan, and that he had forwarded my letter to Gilgit.

Kallick and the ponies rejoined me at Tashkurgan the next day; they had had no adventures of any kind. As Kallick appeared very anxious to rejoin his people at Yarkand, and I had really no longer any need of his services, I paid him and

"KALLICK AND THE PONIES REJOINED ME"

the two Yarkandis off, borrowing the money from the Munshi, who, besides acting as my banker, supplied me with the necessaries of life and provided me with a store of tea, sugar, flour, candles, &c. Kallick had served me well and faithfully; he had given me no single cause for complaint. All the arrangements for my journey had been entrusted to him. In his hands had rested the purchasing of ponies and the payment for supplies. He had proved himself worthy of my confidence. I made him a handsome present over and above his wage and parted from him with regret.

I learnt from the Munshi that Father Hendriks had left



"SOME TWENTY CHINESE SEPOYS RIDING TOWARDS ME"

Kashgar, and only a week previously had passed through Tashkurgan on his way to Gilgit. By this time he would have crossed the Hindu Kush; I should probably overtake him at Hunza. This was good news, for a more interesting travelling companion does not exist. I asked Tilai Bai about his journey from Kala-i-Wamar; and learnt that he had given out that he was a Yarkandi returning from Badakshan, and that beyond the ordinary difficulties of a bad road he had met with no mishaps. The money I had furnished him with had enabled him to ride from one Kirghiz camp to another, and he had ridden day and night without cessation. If he had fallen into the hands of the Cossacks they would have made things very unpleasant for him. I had warned him of this before he started, but he never hesitated an instant, and carried out his instructions to the letter. It was altogether a very plucky action, and a good instance of the risks an Asiatic will incur for an Englishman who has treated him well. I did not forget to mark my approval of his conduct when later on I squared up accounts with him in Kashgar, and we parted with mutual goodwill and esteem.

In Tashkurgan I hired ponies to accompany me as far as Misgah at the head of the Hunza Valley. As I left Tashkurgan it occurred to me that I was still without my coveted big *Ovis Poli*, and I resolved to try the ground where I had shot my finest specimen the previous autumn. So I hired a yourt and ascended the pass which led to the Little Pamir and Aktash. There were no signs of Kirghiz, and the natives assured me there were no Russians in the vicinity, so I went on, trying most of the nullahs without success, and only saw one lot of *Poli* where I had seen hundreds the previous year. Numbers appeared to have died from the murrain, which had evidently raged during the winter, and I saw many dead bodies of *Ovis* and ibex lying about. I accordingly retraced my steps and ascended to the head of the Taghdumbash and thence crossed by the Wakhjir Pass to Bozai Gumbaz, where Mahomed Tucta, the shikari, had told me he had seen some good heads in the nullahs round the Ab-i-Wakhan. Here we camped for several days, during which I managed to get some fair sport, but

nothing larger than the 64-inch head of the previous November fell to my rifle. I saw three bears and was told that there are numbers to be found in the vicinity, but I was not successful in getting a shot at one. The species is of lighter colour and has longer hair than those found on the southern side of the Hindu Kush.

It was while making this *détour* in search of sport that I felt for the first time I had travelled enough. The rugged

SOME FAIR SPORT

surroundings of the Taghdumbash appeared to have lost their charm, and I instinctively turned my thoughts towards the beauties of the Vale of Kashmir, of the peaceful Wular lake, and the comforts of houseboat life at Srinagar. The idea no sooner entered my mind than it lay hold of me irresistibly. The charm of novelty is not everlasting, and the delights of short commons soon begin to pall. I had no ponies, no cook, and no money beyond what I could borrow. I had formulated a plan for following the banks of the Oxus through Wakhan, and crossing the Hindu Kush to Chitral,

BOZAI GUMBAZ IN WAKHAN

whence I should have to make the long and dreary march to Gilgit, for I knew too much of the politicals to imagine that they would allow any private individual to pass through Swat and on to Peshawur. This plan I now abandoned, and determined to push on into Kashmir, pausing only to pay a visit to the Wakhjir Pass, in order to take a look at the glaciers from which spring the head-waters of the mighty Oxus. I accordingly ascended the rocky bed which leads to the wall of ice whence the small streams issue, and stood beside the cradle of one of the mightiest streams of the world.

For a number of years the source of the Amu Daria was a matter of dispute among geographers, and to quite a number of streams was the honour conferred. In turn have the Wakhjir, the Sarhad, the Pamir River, and several others been regarded as the true Oxus, but the question has now been finally decided, and the true source of the mighty river is known to be in the glacier below the Wakhjir Pass, a dozen miles south-west of the Kilik Pass, and some forty miles east of Bozai Gumbaz. Here can be seen a wondrous sea of ice winding round the rift in the mountain peaks towards the gorge, down which flow the streamlets which so soon unite to form the uppermost waters of the river Oxus. From out of two caverns in the ice the streamlets hurry down with ceaseless turmoil to the valley, where they are met by a third torrent emanating from another ice-field on the right. And as I walked beside the streamlet thus enlarged, I noticed how the stupendous scenery merged from a wilderness of rock and ice to a paradise of mountain spurs clothed in vegetation, with here and there the suggestion of a glacier bed or frozen moraine of such beauty as to dwarf one's most exaggerated reminiscence of the Alps or Himalayas.

From the Wakhjir Pass we retraced our steps to the Taghdumbash Pamir, which we found almost deserted. The Kirghiz had nearly all deserted Chinese for Russian territory the previous October, and had so far shown no signs of returning. I had, however, met a good many of the inhabitants of the Taghdumbash at Bozai Gumbaz, and they had told me that they were quite happy there, as the Afghans did not

compel them to supply wood and cut grass for them as the Chinese Amban at Tashkurgan had done.

Passing opposite to the Kilik Pass we followed the Pamir down to the karoul at the entrance to the Mintaka Pass, where we found Kharkash Beg, a Sarikoli, in charge, who welcomed me warmly. I had met him the previous year on the Tagh-dumbash, and knew that he had on many occasions befriended English travellers. In the afternoon we had some rifle practice, and I was surprised at the good shooting made by Kharkash and another Sarikoli at some marmots. They were highly delighted with my rifle, which was the first of its kind they had seen. The next morning we bade a cordial farewell to Kharkash, and left the Pamir behind on our way to the Mintaka Pass. The ascent of the Mintaka, or "Pass of a Thousand Ibex," is very steep, and the ponies had to stop every few yards to recover their breath. At the summit, however, which attains a height of 14,400 feet, there is a broad *col* covered with rocks and débris from the sides of the cliffs above. In the centre of the watershed is a boundary pillar, marking the meeting-place of British and Chinese territory, and from here there is a fine view over an extensive snow field, covering a glacier on the left, by the side of which the path descends. We followed this by zig-zags over an old moraine, along which we picked our way with difficulty among huge rocks and boulders. On our left was the torrent, which, gathering renewed strength as it flowed, grew in volume as we

THE SUMMIT OF THE MINTAKA PASS. BOUNDARY STONE OF BRITISH AND CHINESE TERRITORY

THE SOURCE OF THE OXUS

descended, until it assumed the dimensions of an immense cascade, and presented a most formidable obstacle to our progress. We managed, however, to effect a passage, and eventually reached the level ground below, which we found flooded to a depth of several feet. By dint of considerable labour, involving much fatigue, we got round the lake thus formed, and finally we reached the grassy banks of the river proper, where we came upon some Goojars with a number of sheep and goats belonging to the Thum of Hunza, which had been sent up to the upper valleys for pasturage.

We had reached the confines of civilisation once more, and it seemed as if the surroundings were brighter and the air more pleasant as I realised that I stood upon soil which is practically British, and which forms a portion of that empire on which the sun never sets.

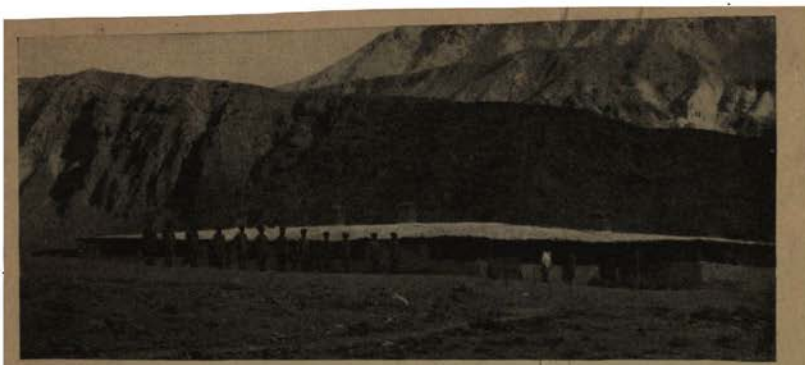
A BIRCH TWIG HANGING BRIDGE IN ROSHAN

CHAPTER X

BACK TO KASHMIR

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
  There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
  By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
  I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
  From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

BYRON.



THE NEAREST BRITISH OUTPOST TO THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER

CHAPTER X

BACK TO KASHMIR

Kunjut once more—Misgah—Khorabad—I meet Father Hendriks —Delayed at Hunza—Absurdity of enforced detention on frontier — Methods of Politicals — Journey resumed — Chalt — Gilgit— Chilas—Back at Wular Lake—My last camp.

CONTINUING our way along the river bank we reached some caverns in the side of a cliff which were inhabited by some Kunjutis, and we sent one of them on to Misgah to inform the headman there of my arrival, and ask him to send some men up to carry my luggage. A messenger returned at midnight with the news that the men would be with me the following day at noon. True to their appointment they turned up, and we started on our way through imposing gorges, with stupendous precipices on either side, and I realised that, though we were once more within British territory, our troubles were by no means at an end. The time of year was the worst I could have selected for my return, for now that the sun had attained the zenith of its power, the snow and ice above were rapidly being thawed, and down every ravine poured glacial torrents, each adding its quota to the great Indus below. Ibex were said to abound in the neighbourhood, but I had

had my fill of shooting and discomfort, and my mind was set on reaching Kashmir as soon as possible.

The mountains seemed to rise perfectly sheer from the river-bed till they culminated in snowy peaks, to view which we had to hold our heads right back and gaze upwards; and as we descended the valley the air became warmer, and the atmosphere less rarefied, until we realised that we had left the freezing winds of the Pamirs far behind us, and a feeling of strength took possession of us as the feeling of languor we had so long experienced passed away. We had some trouble in crossing a large stream, which we struck immediately below Murkush, but we got across without mishap, and at this point I got news of Father Hendriks, who it appeared was travelling in company with a trader from the Punjab. The latter, I was told, had had the misfortune to lose his goods and his pony in a place where the riverside path was narrow and difficult. The poor beast, heavily laden and tired out, had fallen into the torrent, and had been at once washed away.

The Lumbadar at Misgah remembered me from the previous year, and promised to provide the necessary men to carry my baggage in the morning. I was indeed anxious to hurry on to Gilgit with as little delay as possible, especially as for reasons best known to the Indian Government, Englishmen returning to their own country from the wilds of Central Asia are discouraged from taking the shortest and least arduous route *viâ* the Hunza Nagar Valley. Several travellers who preceded me in sporting excursions on the Pamirs have experienced the annoyance and indignity of prolonged detention at Hunza for no reason which will bear examination

News travels apace in these remote valleys. Word of the arrival of a Sahib is passed along from one village to another in less time than one could imagine possible, and the nearest political agent has been informed of the intrusion, and has probably taken steps to arrest the further progress of the unwelcome traveller before he has crossed the frontier many hours. I therefore determined to push on so as to arrive at Hunza before I could be stopped. I had already had experience of the irksomeness of an enforced detention, and if this

was to be my lot again I hoped, at any rate, to reach Hunza first, where I should in all probability have the pleasure of Father Hendriks' company, for I felt pretty certain that if he had reached that place without being stopped I should find him a political prisoner there. With the intention, therefore, of getting as far on my journey as I could, I left Tilai Bai at Misgah with orders to bring the baggage, which now consisted

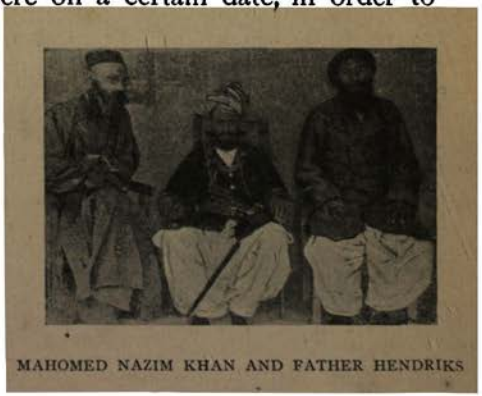
HIGH UP THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE

principally of my hunting trophies, along as quickly as possible, while I, accompanied by my faithful but very footsore dog, Spot, started at 3.30 A.M., so as to cover some ground before the sun topped the mountains. The Hunza River was in full flood, and the only feasible path lay high up the mountain-side, where the track occasionally consisted of a rough log thrown across a chasm, or a rude ladder placed across the face of a rock. A false step in such places as these would have entailed fatal consequences, but I had got used to such places and made nothing of them. At Khorabad, sixteen miles on my way, I rested for an hour and had a drink of sour milk which a

ragged-looking old man brought me in a dirty wooden basin. I then continued my way notwithstanding the great heat, which radiated back at me from the barren rocks along the mountain-side; there was not a breath of air nor a vestige of green of any kind to relieve the eye. My feet were tired and chafed by the severe up-and-down work, and I was delighted when, about five in the afternoon, I crawled, tired and weary, up the ascent to the village of Khaibar, twenty-six miles from my start; here I found the same man in whose house I had stayed the previous year. I had brought in my haversack my last remaining skin of Brand's beef-tea, and I cut off a slice and boiled it with some rice, and soon had a meal which gave me renewed strength. Then I lay down on the hard floor and slept like a top. But I could not afford much time for sleep, and soon after midnight was again on the road, this time on a donkey, which saved my blistered feet, although the pace was not so rapid. I crossed the great Batur glacier by the light of the moon, and was much struck by the ghostly appearance of the great hummocks of blue ice in the moonlight. Soon after dawn we reached Pasu, where no one was astir, so I lay down in the liarat and slept amid the orchards full of apricots, which, though not thoroughly ripe, were eatable and extremely refreshing. They were the first fruit of this kind I had tasted for over a year, and with a glass of good milk made an excellent breakfast. We reached Gulmit about two o'clock and stayed the night there, making an early start towards Hunza, which was still twenty-five miles away along the worst road in the whole valley. Never shall I forget the heat of this march or the steep precipices over which we had to climb. I hardly expected to be able to hold out, and long before Hunza came in sight was so weary that I could hardly put one foot before the other. To keep me going I ate my last pot of Liebig. It had the desired effect, but gave me an intolerable thirst which I quenched by frequent descents to the icy river. Luckily I was saved the last five miles, for the Mir sent a pony to meet me, which just enabled me to get in.

At Hunza I found Father Hendriks as I had expected. He had already been detained here a week by the officials at

Gilgit, and there appeared no likelihood of his being allowed to move on for some time. It seemed very absurd, this pretended suspicion of Hendriks, seeing that the Government knew all about him from their agent at Kashgar, with whom he had lived for several years, in addition to which he was a great friend of Bower's and Younghusband's, either of whom would have been only too pleased to vouch for his *bona fides*. Poor Father Hendriks! It was very rough on him; he was undertaking the long journey to Bombay in order to meet a steamer which was due to touch there on a certain date, in order to have a farewell interview with a fellow missionary who had worked with him for many years in Mongolia, and who was returning to Europe to pass his last days in well-earned repose; and now, after braving the difficulties and dangers of the worst portion of the last journey, it seemed that he was to be needlessly detained until he was bound to miss the steamer. It was a hard blow to him; yet I found him genial and sympathetic as ever, ready to put all his own troubles on one side in his anxiety to help me. He had already won the hearts of the Mir and his Wazir, and I found him surrounded by an admiring audience, with whom he was discussing the genealogy of the Thums of Hunza. Mahomed Nazim Khan, the ruler of Hunza, very kindly arranged for a relay of ponies for me as far as his territory extended, and sent a message across to his relative of Nagar asking him to do the same, and so I set out the following morning in excellent spirits at having got away without being stopped by the British agency. As I entered Ata-abad, five miles from Baltit, the hospital assistant there came out, and, having saluted, put a note in my hand, which proved to be from the assistant political officer at Gilgit, requesting me to stop at Hunza till orders had been received from the Govern-



MAHOMED NAZIM KHAN AND FATHER HENDRIKS

ment. I had expected as much, so I was really not much surprised, as the same treatment had been accorded to most of the British travellers returning from the Pamirs of late years. At the same time it seemed to me that in my case this treatment was more than usually gratuitous, inasmuch as I had only the previous year been given permission to make my way to Central Asia by this route, and one would naturally suppose that no difficulty would be made respecting my returning by it. On the outward journey my companion and myself had to some extent taxed the ingenuity of the politicals to arrange for the supply of carriers in the upper and less populous districts of Goojal, for we had required between us 130 men ; but now I was alone with one servant and loads for half a dozen men—not a very formidable party. And the politicals were quite aware that I had not enjoyed a particularly easy time during the past few months ; yet here I was stopped.

I am disposed to enlarge somewhat on the questions involved in the course followed by the Government. I can quite understand that it is highly desirable that travellers should be discouraged from travelling beyond the frontier in cases where political complications might be likely to ensue, but since the Russo-Afghan and the Anglo-Russian frontiers had been demarcated by the Pamir Boundary Commission this objection falls to the ground. When in India just before starting for the Pamirs the previous year I had been utterly astonished at the ignorance displayed by officials whose business it was to be thoroughly acquainted with frontier matters. A certain official, a very big man high up in the service, whose name I will for the present withhold, to whom I went for assistance and information respecting the regions I proposed to visit, exhibited the haziest idea respecting Central Asia, and was evidently unaware that the spheres of influence beyond the Hindu Kush had been definitely determined. He warned me that the country was one of great danger and difficulty, where political complications might result with Russia or with China if British travellers were encouraged. He showed the utmost ignorance respecting the literature of the subject, was entirely unacquainted with the standard works of Curzon and Young-

husband, and yet held a post which required his having every atom of information regarding the trans-frontier regions at his fingers' ends.

The Indian Government does everything it can to discourage travellers on and beyond the frontier, especially in the neighbourhood of Gilgit and Hunza, where the apparition of a civilian is invariably regarded with an unfavourable eye. In former days there were good reasons why the number of Europeans venturing in the direction of Gilgit should be as limited as possible, for there was only a mountain track, and all baggage had to be laboriously carried by coolies, who were forcibly impressed. But these days are past. There is a ten-foot road right up to Gilgit and as far as Hunza beyond, with a surface that leaves nothing to be desired. The sportsman or traveller can hire his own ponies and make his own arrangements for supplies in Kashmir, and be quite independent of the authorities. The British officer, jaded with his work in the heat of the plains, is, like a keen sportsman, prepared to rough it with the best. He will willingly for a time do without his luxuries, and live, as a Russian officer lives, on what he can get. A month of native chupatties is fully compensated by the mountain air and fine sport obtainable amongst the Himalayas; but the ground is forbidden him, and he is penned within the limits of India by official red tape. Political officers have told me that the men of Hunza and Nagar are averse to carrying loads. This may have been so formerly, but I certainly never noticed it either on my outward or my homeward journey through the district, for everywhere I experienced the greatest readiness on the part of the natives to earn the liberal compensation awarded them for the arduous work of carrying loads along the mountain roads; and I cannot help believing that it is highly desirable that the frontier should be more generally open to English travellers than is the case. There are, of course, frontier districts where the Pathans are so fanatical as to make it dangerous for a traveller to visit them. But it must be remembered that the only Englishman they ever have the opportunity of seeing is the political officer, whose dealings with them are of an official character, and these wild

tribesmen are strongly adverse to the hard and fast measures of Government routine. I am convinced that the best way to create a good understanding with the tribes of the frontier is to encourage travellers to wander among them and accustom them to intercourse with Englishmen. In Central Asia the wandering Briton's reputation stands extremely high, and there is no reason why as good a feeling should not be engendered among the tribes on the southern side of the Hindu Kush as now exists on the northern side of the Pamirs and beyond.

I was detained a week at Ata-abad, but Hendriks was with me to bear me company, and Rakapushi lay before to delight my gaze. The scene from the Hunza Valley was indeed one of the most beautiful on earth, and I am thankful that I have been permitted to behold it.

At last permission arrived for Hendriks and myself to go on to Gilgit. We lost no time, and within an hour had bid farewell to Nazim Khan, who had done his best to make the time pass pleasantly for us, and we were on our way. We rode the rough ponies hard until we came to a village nestling at the foot of Rakapushi's lower spurs overlooking a surging river torrent far below. Here we rested, obtaining the supply of milk from the headman, and, declining his invitation to occupy a house in the village, we started just as the stars began to show and rode on until we came to a piece of turf beside the river, and here we lay down and slept in the open. We were kept awake for some time by the barking of a dog in a neighbouring house, and I was awoke soon after daylight by the same animal, who was engaged in mortal combat with my dog Spot. The stars were still visible and the scene enchanting, and I watched the dawn coming as we packed up and prepared to depart.

We resumed our journey, and as we descended the valley a draught of wind came down from a side gully, to which I turned and saw a mighty glacier, which filled the higher regions of the nullah and rose towards the crest of Rakapushi, towering above all in its peerless majesty. The whole of the gigantic mass was gilded by the sun, while the sea of ice glinted in its brilliant whiteness. I do not think I ever enjoyed a scene more intensely.

We pushed on hard all day, stopping at the fort of Chalt, where the Subhadar in charge of the detachment of Kashmir rifles offered us some milk and chupatties while changing ponies, and then, sometimes riding and sometimes dragging our weary steeds up steep and giddy heights, for the flooded river often covered the lower path, we put our best foot forward, and at ten o'clock arrived weary, hot and dirty at Gilgit.

We found the officers at Gilgit surprised to see us. Had I not received an official letter on my way from Hunza? It had been despatched over night by a mounted messenger, and in it I was ordered to remain where I was, as the previous permission to come in had been a mistake. Then I remembered that as we galloped along a man had given me a letter, but it did not look interesting, and I had put it in my pocket and forgotten all about it. It was just as well, for here we were at Gilgit, and that was something. How I revelled in the hot bath, the clean linen sheets and the attention of the barber only weary travellers can appreciate. But my detention was not over. I was to be kept here another week, until the Government of India had made up its mind whether, having got as far as Gilgit, it would be safe to allow me to proceed to Kashmir. But I was among my countrymen, and the comforts of civilised life were an agreeable change after the short commons to which I had become accustomed. So there was no very great cause for grumbling. But it was terribly hot. Gilgit in summer is simply scorching, and the barren valley and the loess cliffs get baked by the sun until the rocks become so hot that one cannot lay a hand on them. Tilai Bai and my baggage duly arrived from Hunza all well, except poor little M. Blanc, a Kashgar pug that Macartney had presented me with, who—poor little beast—fell into the Gilgit river just as his troubles were practically ended, and was drowned. But Spot, Qua and the four Tazi hounds from Darwaz were very fit, and in due time reached Kashmir safely. We killed the time of our detention pleasantly enough, sleeping in the garden so as to get the cool night air, and loafing in the shade in the cool of the evening waiting for our reprieve.

But at last the long-delayed telegram came, and I was free

to return to Kashmir. Father Hendriks, however, was detained another fortnight, and as I had promised to help him down to Bombay we were both disappointed. Sending on my belongings a day in advance, I started after dinner, so as to ride through the cool of the night and avoid the fierce heat of the Bunji plain, which in the summer has been aptly termed a hell upon earth. I rode all night and arrived at Bunji at dawn, when I rested in the well-known bungalow through the day. By great good fortune I found a merchant there who had just arrived from Abbotabad with wares of various kinds, among other things—and to my mind most important of all—a few dozen bottles of beer. It was sparkling Pilsener, and I had not tasted any for a year; so I set about quenching my thirst, and did it thoroughly—it was a big one—and laid in a further supply for the journey. Then I slept until it was cool enough to proceed.

Crossing the Ramghat bridge we once more started along the zigzagging road, and at Doyan got our last glance at the Bunji plain far below, across which the sinuous course of the Indus could be traced from the rocky defile of Haramosh to the sullen gorges of Chilas. Beyond lay the amphitheatre of the Gilgit range and the high peaks of Kunjut on their right. Then turning a corner which shut out the magnificence of the view, we sped on through the stillness of the night. It was dark, for there was no moon, and we felt our way along the sides of the mountains; and through the sleeping villages the dogs barked at us until we reached Astor, where men and beasts alike being exhausted, we rested till the next morning. I decided to avoid the passage of the Burzil Pass, and proceed along the beautiful Komri Valley instead. I had to make the last day's journey, a long ride of fifty miles, on a wretched transport pony, which I sometimes rode and sometimes dragged behind me until Gurais was reached, outside which place I passed some ladies on horseback, who were evidently astonished at the ragged spectacle I presented. We were indeed a rough looking lot, with our long beards, our clothes in rags, our old and patched native boots, and our complexions burnt by the mixture of scorching sun and icy winds we had experienced.

Next day we traversed the Tragbal Pass, on the summit of which we met numbers of transport ponies returning to Kashmir from the Gilgit agency, and the Kashmiris in charge exhibited much curiosity respecting my party, and more especially in regard to the dogs, which were of breeds unknown to them. Late in the afternoon I took my last look at the pyramid of Nunga Parbat, and then we started threading our way through shady forests of deodars and pines carpeted with luxurious grass, until we came to the dâk bungalow of Tragbal. Notwithstanding the evident anxiety of the man in charge to persuade me to stop here, I decided to push on, as the weather was so fine and the air so mild, that I preferred to make my last camp in the open air before rejoining civilisation, with its circumscribed habits. We therefore descended a short distance and struck off the main road by a side path leading to a dell of green turf, with a tiny stream running in its midst, surrounded by pines, and with a glimpse of the valley of beautiful Kashmir at my feet I made my last camp beneath the skies.

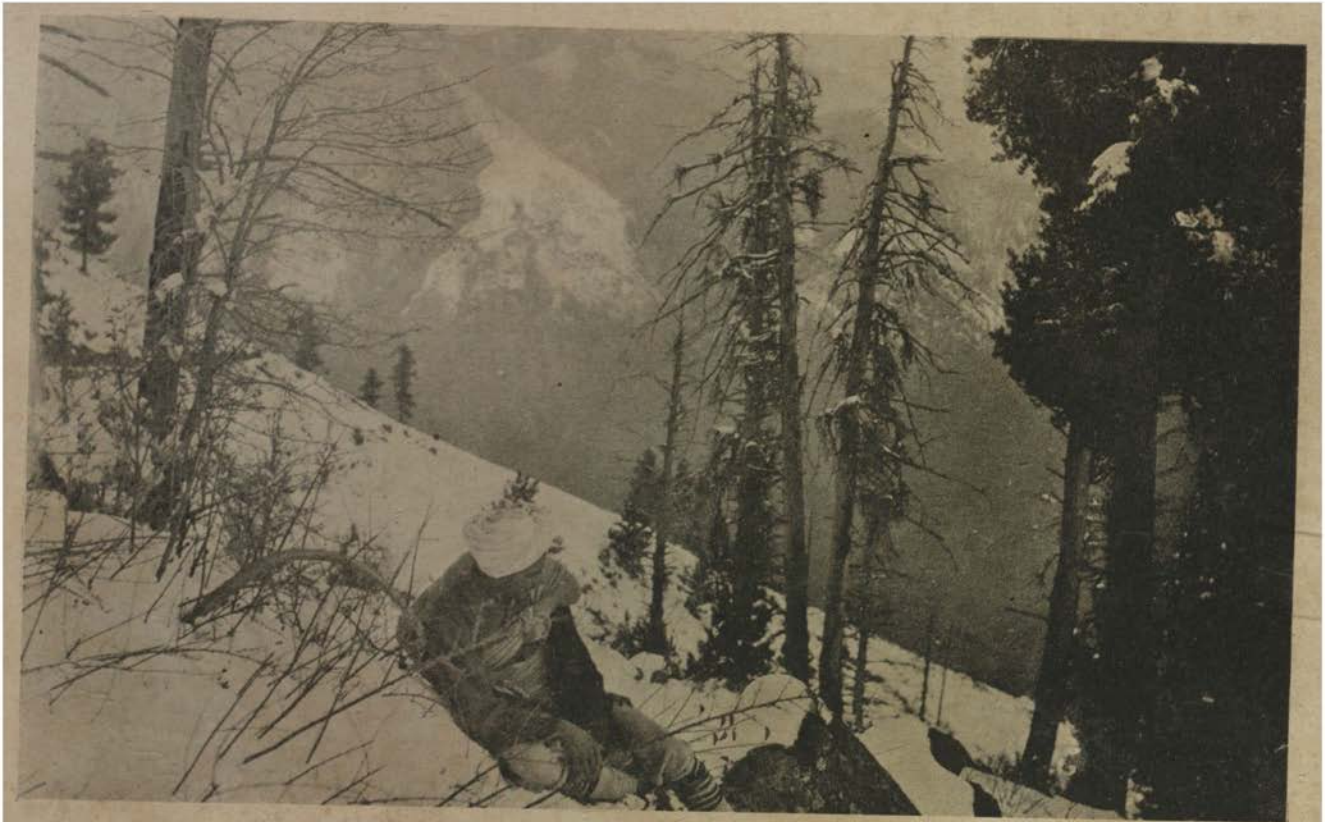
We piled the baggage round and tethered the ponies close by, and then Tilai Bai, the ever useful, served me my last jungle meal. As I ate I looked down on the Wular lake and the fertile valley with the silvery Jhelum threading its winding course. I recognised the glories of the Creator's handiwork, and I sat and meditated, absorbed in the beauties of the waning day until I was aroused by Tilai Bai, who came to spread out my sleeping bag.

Night is a monotonous time when spent under a roof, but beneath the heavenly canopy it is a revelation. One seems to hear Nature breathe in her sleep, occasionally sighing as she turns until, refreshed and strengthened by a period of repose, she wakes with the coming of the new-born day. To appreciate the beauties of the night it is needful to get away from the hum of civilisation, and to take refuge on the frontiers of the world. That night, the last I spent beneath the stars in far Kashmir, will ever remain firmly impressed on my memory.

When I awoke most of the stars had disappeared, and I watched the faint haze of light which heralded the day grow upon the horizon. The valley, 8000 feet below, lay clouded in

blue darkness, but presently a broad streak of orange melted into gold along the snowy crests of the mountains, and the lake began to disperse the watery mists upon its bosom. I rose and took my tea, and watched the men pack the baggage. And as the sunlight ran at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows along the grassy slopes below, we started down the mountain side, and pushing on steadily reached the Wular lake early in the day to find a luxurious Kashmir gondola awaiting me.

The time had come when Tilai Bai and I were to part. He desired to return to his home at Yarkand. The last I saw of him was salaaming to me respectfully on the side of the Wular as my boat pushed off. He had served me well and faithfully. May peace be with him.



THE TRAGBAL PASS, KASHMIR

CHAPTER XI

KASHMIR AND IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

Who has not heard of the Vale of Kashmir,
With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave,
Its temples, and grottos, and fountains as clear
As the snow on the mountain, the light on the wave?
When the waterfalls gleam like a quick fall of stars,
And the nightingales chant from the Isle of Chenars . . . .
When the East is as warm as the light of first hopes,
And Day, with his banner of radiance unfurl'd,
Shines in through the mountainous portal that opes
Sublime, from that Valley of Bliss to the world!

MOORE.

IRISES—KASHMIR

CHAPTER XI

KASHMIR AND IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

Reminiscences—Results of experience—Association of people and places—The age of travel—Removal of prejudice incidental to new scenes—Travel a habit with some—Regular life with others—English Society a shock to the traveller fresh from the far-off—The relation between one's-self and one's surroundings.

THE region of ice and snow was now far behind me. I was once more in the Happy Valley.

Month after month I had been alone—nothing around me but desolate stretches of plain, wide wastes of snow, rough-and-tumble rocks and boulders, and the solemn mountains. Sometimes the loneliness of it all was overwhelming. Byron says:

> Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
> In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
> A truth which through our being then doth melt,
> And purifies from self.

And it is true that there is no loneliness as bitter as the loneliness of uncongenial society; but at the same time no one has realised all that Nature can be, and can give, who has *not* felt what it is to share every impression with one who knows and understands. Throughout my wanderings I was often conscious of how much I missed; and when from the lonely land of innermost Asia, where it seemed almost in the fitness of things that one *should* be solitary, I came down into the glorious sunny valley, a world of smiles and freshness, I felt more than ever the want of one kindred spirit, without which happiness is only a broken arc.

It was a beautiful world which I was in now. The flowers, the cool shades, the great trees murmuring with gentle breezes, all rested and delighted my eyes, long accustomed to snow and ice and cold monotony. Certainly the soft influences of this land of fruits and flowers should teach one a more sunshiny creed than belongs to those whose work is in sterner climes or among the tares of fallen humanity. I shall never forget the first evening on the Wular.

'Twas when the hour of evening came
Upon the Lake, serene and cool,
When Day had hid his sultry flame
Behind the palms of Baramoule

that I felt that to the valley of Kashmir nothing needs to be added. It is a "lodge in some vast wilderness" for which one often sighs when in the midst of a bustle at once sordid and trivial. The scenery satisfies the soul: it is magnificent, and the air is lifegiving.

From my boat I watched the sunset that evening. Haramuk, the Tragbal, and the mountains towards the east, stood out in a medium of quiet, deep violet against the amber light in the sky, their grey, bleached summits peaked, turreted and snow-slashed, piled above the dark forests, gleamed with glory. The Wular lay "one burnished sheet of living gold," every ripple made by our boat reflected the deep violet mountains. To the west was a carnival of colour—indescribable. Every instant it changed, deepened, reddened, melted, growing more

and more wonderful till at last it faded even off the highest jewelled peaks, and they became wan as the face of death.

A sunset breathes a tonic sadness, always brave, never hysterical. Upon the crowded, noisy life of the world the evening gradually falls, and the lights are extinguished. The inevitable end draws near, and is welcome. To read a sunset well is to anticipate experience, and when the hours of the long shadows fall for us in reality we may hope to face them with a mind as quiet.

It is curious how certain real scenes will sometimes become associated in our minds with people and incidents purely imaginary, so that we dream of them and people them with our own ghosts. Haramuk and the Tragbal, the tall larches, the mountain pines, the glorious peaks of snow, are dear almost less for their own sake than for a vague fleeting image which they have left me. The long vista of memories, which is the legacy of Travel, is indeed worth gaining. "A rolling stone may gather no moss"; but, after all, this is by no means the most precious possession.

This is the age of travel, and it is right when we are young to go forth and with an eye of leisure to look upon it all. Routine is repugnant, and a man is a mere prisoner, who, from his cradle to his old age, sees the same and ever the same. Where there is a particle of soul there must spring up an earnest desire to explore creation and to study mankind. But to make travel what it ought to be, *a worthy object* and *a true spirit* are essential. Objects are limitless—art, study, benevolence, exploration, sport, and many more; but, after all, it is only the *spirit* in which we travel, which writes up upon the walls of Life—success or failure. (Travel is not to be confused with emigration, which is another matter.) A traveller should cultivate the habit of political thought before he starts, he should read what others have learned and left behind them of the countries and peoples he means to visit, for by so doing he starts, as it were, with a good handicap. If he wants to find out the truth about matters, he must know foreign languages and be connected with no newspaper, in which latter case he is not exactly free, for he has less chance of

giving honest opinions. He must not rush across countries by train in that superhumanly selfish manner which gives *them* no thought beyond our own convenience, our inconvenience, our sleep, the next refreshment stoppage, and our weariness. Such a mode of travel is suitable when we are hurrying to a deathbed; emptiness suits passion and suffering, for they empty out the world. In a train the *real* sense of wonder at a great distance overcome is lost; lost, too, is most of the emotion attendant on change of place. The change in the lie of the land is never noticed; the alterations in vegetation, in the types of architecture, the individualities of the little villages, pass as mere pictures even if seen at all. You who rush by Club train to Monte Carlo—what do you know of France, its peasants, its agriculture, its towns, its ways?

Individual taste is strikingly manifest in travel. Scott cared nothing for Roman remains, and loved a feudal tower; Dr. Johnson said that convents interested him above all things; Stanley, Livingstone, Younghusband were more of the type of Christopher Columbus and Cortes. From the travel of which I speak we gain in self-knowledge (we are thrown on our own resources), in will power, in perceptive power—we expand mentally. How many of Dr. Johnson's prejudices would have faded away had he blossomed in a wider sphere? How different would the Chinese have been to-day had they travelled as the Venetians travelled? The world's life-lesson is experience; it is only in a wide circle that this character is imparted to all the book knowledge ever gained.

Above and beyond every other advantage in travelling, one is free from all previous ties with, or claims upon, the people whom one meets, and hence one is taken for *one's-self*, and passes for what one is worth. One *is* one's-self. Truth, pure and simple, is engendered, and we learn to appreciate it. Intolerance and contempt fly away, the boundaries of sect are overlooked, the veil of condition is pierced, the exaggerated aspect of our own selfish aims is reduced to its proper proportion. The memorials of the past teach us to estimate more calmly an existence whose duration is so transitory.

But it is not in this spirit that many travel. They go

because then "I shall seem to be doing something;" the silent opprobrium of the world and "doing nothing" drives them out of England. Having run away to other countries because they are no good in their own, roving and restless, they take but a cursory view of things.

Like a valet or an interloper such light characters travel in order to get something which they do not carry with them in order to be amused, in order to learn something of which they know nothing. Such ideas are empty dreams. Ourselves like stern shadows follow us wherever we go—our ignorant selves, our indolent selves, our sad selves—and to imagine that we shall become different people in Japan or in California is to build sand castles by the sea. But what is to be said of those who never make an effort to travel, who, with all opportunities, make a journey once a year to Scotland, to a German watering-place, or to Paris.

Disturb them not. At least they "hurry not to arrive where none expect them"; neither do they "drag at each remove a lengthening chain."

Possibly they feel

> A man's best things are nearest him;
> Lie close about his feet.

Travel, like everything else, may become a habit, and the free, wandering life is hard to break through; to care for it once is to feel restless ever after in conventional society. The intellect is vagabond, and our minds travel even when our bodies are forced to stay at home. Our whole system of education fosters this. What did we learn at Eton, Sandhurst? Life alone teaches us to think. Ambitions and troubles raise unanswerable questions, and it is then that the intellect is cultivated in a desultory fashion. School, home and England have done little towards our education, and therefore it is that men go forth into the world, and that those who can, travel.

Charles Kingsley at twenty-one had the thirst for adventure and excitement strong in him. Little England, in those first heats of youth, looked rather like a prison than a palace.

Others went out to see the glorious new worlds of the West, the glorious old worlds of the East, why should not he? Others fulfilled to the utmost that strange lust after the "burra shikar" which he said "made his pulse throb as often as he saw the heads in his friend A.'s hall;" why should not he? But at three-and-twenty he had discovered that his lot was "to stay at home and earn his bread plainly enough." His noble life has been a help to many. Therefore, it is not *necessary* to travel in order to be great, though it is an immense stepping-stone, and though no doubt all smaller work must seem paltry to the man who has commanded forces, who has ruled provinces, who has seen "a people whom he has not known serve him." As Charles Kingsley says to travellers, "No wonder that your very amusements in that grand Indian land should be on a par with your work, and that when you go a-sporting you ask for no meaner preserve than the primæval forest, no lower park wall than the snow-peaks of the Himalaya."

"Yes, you have been a 'burra shikari' as well as a 'burra sahib.' How many tons of mighty monsters have you done to death since we were schoolboys together? How many starving villages have you fed with the flesh of buffalo or elephant? How many have you delivered from man-eating tigers or wary old alligators, their craws full of poor girl's bangles? Have you not been charged by rhinoceroses, all but ripped up by boars? Have you not seen face to face *Ovis Poli* himself, the giant mountain sheep—primæval ancestor, perhaps, of all the flocks on earth? Your memories must be like those of Theseus and Hercules, full of slain monsters. Your brain must be one fossiliferous deposit, in which gaur and sambur, hog and tiger, bear and leopard, rhinoceros and elephant lie heaped together, as the old ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs are heaped in the lias rocks at Lyme." He goes on to say that, after a man has played the game all round, the growing sense of the pettiness of human struggles grows upon him, together with a respect for simple labours, a thankfulness for simple pleasures, a *sympathy* with simple people, and possibly with that moorland, which Kingsley called his "winter garden," which was as full of delight

and instruction to him as the Himalayas or the Punjab are to other men, and in which he contrived to find as much health and amusement as he had time for.

And so we come back to England once again, after all we have lived for, and fought for, and wrought for.

Who does not hate returning to civilisation? How the tumultuous and grey tide of life, the empire of routine, the unrejoicing faces of our elders, the man-stifled town, and the pitiless "money-grabbing," fill a man with contemptuous surprise!

The first shock of English society is like a cold plunge —that artificial place, made so by our choice, and for our sins. The subjection of women, together with their managing arts, are all painful ingredients, and all help to falsify our relations with each other. It is never until we get clear of this amusing, artificial scene, that genuine relations are founded or ideas honestly compared; but once out of doors, purified by "God's glorious oxygen," occasions arise when the whole material of life is turned over and over, when ideas are struck out and shared, when we are conducted into new worlds of thought.

After coming back to civilisation the keen edge is taken off the memory of the old roving life, it is scotched, but it is *never killed;* rather it keeps returning, if more rarely and more strangely, yet stronger than ever. Some old association crops up, some picture is seen, and England and all present associations fade away like a dream—we are back again, where our souls would ever be, in our true environment, in that far off land.

Comparisons inevitably rise by-and-by between the Himalayas and the most beautiful scenes we travelled through, on the one hand, and England with its fogs upon the other.

How can the little island with its bleak winds, its provincial towns, its suburban seaboards, compare with that distant world of mountains and snow and of illimitable stretches? Even London, with the sense which the cold weather leaves us, of the glare of the shop windows under the green glimmer of the winter sunsets, and the frost tingling in our blood, what, after

all, is London, but a busy city from which we would fain flee away and be at rest ?

And yet we settle down, for a time at any rate, in society, and if travel has taught us anything at all, it is to be more or less philosophical, to recognise the depth of human ignorance, and the vanity of human endeavour. For the world is not going your way, or my way, or any man's, but the way of some Law, some Power beyond our comprehension, which is being obeyed by "this dread machinery of sin and sorrow."

Having fallen through story after story of our own vanity and ambition, and sitting ruefully among the ruins, we begin gradually to measure the stature of our friends, to feel them believing in us, and standing between us and our own self-contempt. Divining in them the self-same throb of human sorrow and hope, sympathy links us with our fellow men, and still spreading ever wider the influential circle, they weave us in and in with the fabric of contemporary life.

And yet we shall always shock each other in life as well as in art. We can never get the sun into our pictures; we can never get the abstract right (if there be such a thing) into our books, and we are generally misunderstood. At the most we can but strike glimmers of the great light which blinds us from heaven, and strive to shed upon foul details a spirit of magnanimity.

It is this great human loneliness, this terrifying isolation of soul, which made Jean Paul Richter say, when he felt Night, that great shadow profile of Day, lie upon his bosom, soothing it and comforting it as the likeness of a departed friend:

"Oh! great Nature, to thee will I come at all times when among men I feel troubled and sad. Thou art my oldest and truest friend; thou wilt always comfort me, until I fall from thy embrace prostrate at thy feet and require comfort no longer."

It is this voice which calls us, when we have come back again to society and to the pulse of civilisation; which calls us back, it may be to innermost Asia, it *must* be to *wherever* we were in true and perfect relations with our surroundings, and where shams and conventionalities were unknown.

Where forlorn sunsets flare and fade
On desolate sea and lonely sand,
Out of the silence and the shade
What is the voice of strange command
Calling you still, as friend calls friend
With love that cannot brook delay,
To rise and follow the ways that wend
Over the hills and far away?

Hark in the city, street on street
A roaring reach of death and life,
Of vortices that clash and fleet
And ruin in appointed strife.
Hark to it calling, calling clear,
Calling until you cannot stay
From dearer things than your own most dear
Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of ebb and flow,
Out of the sight of lamp and star,
It calls you where the good winds blow,
And the unchanging meadows are:
From faded hopes and hopes agleam,
It calls you, calls you night and day
Beyond the dark into the dream
Over the seas and far away.

W. E. HENLEY.

MY LAST CAMP IN KASHMIR

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSSIANS ON THE PAMIRS

Listen in the North, my boys, there's trouble in the wind.
Tramp, O Cossacks, troop in front, grey greatcoats behind.
Trouble on the Frontier of a most amazin' kind,
Trouble on the waters o' the Oxus.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

A NOMAD'S ENCAMPMENT ON THE PAMIRS

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSSIANS ON THE PAMIRS

Non-political nature of my journey—Prejudice of travellers—Points which struck me—British representatives in Innermost Asia—M. Petrovsky—Mr. Macartney—Chinese misrule—The Pamir boundaries—Treaties—Geographical and political divisions—Russian Posts—The Tajiks—Native dislike of Russians—Schemes for invading British territory—Lack of justice in Russian rule—Trustworthy authorities—Russia's aim—Excellence of Russian information.

MY object in setting out to visit the Pamirs had been purely personal. I had heard much of the wonders of the Roof of the World, and desired to view for myself the marvels which Nature has there piled up with such munificence. Besides experiencing the attraction which so irresistibly draws the traveller far afield in order that he may visit regions comparatively unknown, I had been tempted by the rumours which had reached me of the sport with which the Pamir Region abounds, and my intention was to devote myself entirely to the calling of the explorer and the hunter during my extended tour.

I make the foregoing statement in order to disabuse the

reader of any suspicion that the remarks I am about to offer respecting the political side of the Pamir question are prejudiced. I had no political programme to fulfil in my travels. I was not entrusted with a mission, Governmental or otherwise; nor did I start with any animus in regard to the vexed question of Anglo-Russian politics. My previous intercourse with the subjects of the Tsar had been such as falls to the lot of the average roaming Englishman, and by reason of many agreeable friendships I had come to regard the educated Russian as one of the pleasantest companions it is possible to meet. Nor have I the least hesitation in adding that I remain of the same opinion still. I have not, however, allowed my personal regard for the individual to prejudice my judgment of the class, and in this respect I claim that I speak with more authority than the majority of recent writers who have discussed Russian characteristics.

Travelling as I did unhampered by the attention of an official mentor, I was in a far better position to gauge the actual condition of affairs in the Russian Pamirs than had I been escorted by a party of officers specially detailed to show me just that which it was deemed desirable for me to see, and to carefully exclude from my ken those things which it was thought better to conceal. It is just this method of showing visitors round that is responsible for the many very erroneous and frequently ridiculous statements which are put about respecting what is termed the "true conditions of affairs in Central Asia." And it is due to this system of judicious concealment that the exaggerated panegyrics of the paternal system of Russian rule are promulgated by writers who should know better.

I lay the greater stress on this fact for the reason that it has had, and is having, a distinctly prejudicial effect upon British interests in Asia. It was only the other day that I read in a book written by a gentleman of reputation, who has recently paid a visit to Turkestan, an account of the Russian rule there exercised, which is absolutely misleading in its facts and absurd in its deductions. The gentleman in question, while doubtless writing in all possible good faith, could only describe

what he had seen, and as he had never got well away from the Trans-Caspian Railway, and only saw what the officers who acted as his cicerones chose to show him, it is small wonder that the result of his vaticinations is entirely valueless.

There is another class of traveller, who possesses the faculty of himself refusing to see those things which are not pleasant to his eye. This is the writer who holds that the prestige of Great Britain is unassailable, and that the rivalry of Russia, either politically or commercially, is a matter which need not seriously be considered. For the purpose of securing evidence in a prejudged cause this method may have its advantage, but it is scarcely honest dealing, and in its way is responsible for as much mischief as the other. I preface what I am about to say with the above remarks, inasmuch as I am exceedingly anxious that the reader should understand that I am reciting facts for which I can vouch, and that I am neither approaching my subject from the standpoint of a partisan, nor from that of the receptive sightseer, who obediently accepts all that is told him by his mentors, and distributes *ex parte* statements with a lavish hand.

While journeying in innermost Asia I was deeply impressed by three facts. They were; the barbarous insistence of the Russian Governmental system, the brilliant success which invariably attains Russian aims, and the puerile weakness displayed by the British Government in the protecting of this country's interests. There was no evading them. Evidences of the Muscovite method were on every side apparent, and to deny the success of the Russian aim would be as feeble as to question the remarkable ability which creates it.

The position occupied by our own representatives in Central Asia is in marked contrast to what it should be, and the weakness of the policy pursued by the Home Government in the furtherance of our interests greatly to be deplored. I have already, when narrating my experiences in Kashgar, referred to the relative positions occupied by M. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul-General, and Mr. Macartney, our own representative. The former, invested with full authority, enjoying the utmost confidence at the hands of his Government, and accorded an

entirely free hand, has by generous use of his powers attained such influence in Chinese Turkestan as to practically dominate the very mandarins who nominally govern the province. Mr. Macartney remains at Kashgar, in the character of a private individual. He is denied even the style of consul, is prohibited from taking any step, however necessary or however insignificant, without instructions from headquarters, and is not even permitted to wear a consular uniform. The full signification of this last prohibition can only be realised by those who have lived among the Chinese, but I can assure my readers that the contrast between the Russian Consul-General paying a state visit to the Chinese Governor in full panoply with military cap and silver buttons, and carrying a sword at his side; and the representative of Great Britain, attending the same reception in a frock coat and top hat, does not tend to raise the prestige of this country in the appreciation of the people of Kashgar.

CHINESE CAR, KASHGAR

The equivocal position in which our representative finds himself is the frequent cause of his appearing ridiculous. Holding the absurdly chosen title of "Special Assistant to the Resident in Kashmir for Chinese Affairs," it is Mr. Macartney's frequent duty to use such influence as he possesses in the interests of native-born British subjects who find their way in the course of trade to Kashgar from the Punjab. Such a case occurred just previously to my arrival at Kashgar, with results that were exceedingly mortifying.

Being called to Yarkand by routine business, several petitions were presented to our agent by British subjects, who begged him to adjudicate in cases of dispute which had arisen between traders, as no redress could be obtained through the Amban, notwithstanding repeated applications, the truth being that applicants were not even allowed to enter the Yamen

without the payment of liberal "backsheesh" to all the Chinese hangers on. Mr. Macartney refused to adjudicate on these petitions, since he had no *locus standi* to interfere, but in one case, when both the parties to the dispute were British subjects, he thought he might safely arbitrate, and did so.

As soon as he had left Yarkand, the Amban promptly reversed his decision, threatened the petitioners with a hundred lashes each, and forbade them ever to pay any attention to English travellers, either by going out to meet them, as the custom had hitherto been, by helping them to change Indian rupees into Chinese currency, or to visit them during their stay at Yarkand.

No greater contrast could be imagined than that which marks the difference between the treatment accorded to the Russian and the British agents at Kashgar. M. Petrovsky applies to the Taotai for some concession. The Taotai probably at once assents, for he knows his man, and does not care to run the risk of his displeasure. Should, however, he remain unresponsive, the Consul-General would think nothing of adopting the course he threatened to take some time ago, and having the Taotai well beaten by his Cossacks; and in the event of the demand being one which that official cannot himself grant, M. Petrovsky has only to telegraph to Peking, when the Russian Minister will forthwith put such pressure on the Tsungli Yamen as will promptly bring instructions to the Taotai to do all that is required of him.

The evil effects of such an action are incalculable. The Indian traders are discouraged from continuing their uphill battle to gain a living, and they are rapidly losing all confidence in the power of their Government or its Agent to support them. The reports which these men take back with them to India are doing an immense amount of harm, and the Russian officials are all the while laughing in their sleeves. Nor is the lamentable state of things described wasted on the Afghan merchants who trade with Kashgaria. They naturally compare the British with the Russian system, and spread reports about their country as to the manner in which the latter invariably supports and

protects its traders, while the former leaves them to fight their own battles.

Even at Vierny beyond the Thian Shan, a large town of considerable importance and where roads from Siberia, Kulja, Tashkent, and Kashgar all unite, and where, therefore, representatives from every nation in Asia may be encountered, I was astonished at the accurate way in which Mr. Macartney's position had been summed up by Russian and Sart traders having dealings with Kashgar or Yarkand. The former are quite aware that our Agent occupies a position not officially recognised by the Chinese, and expressed their surprise that the British Government allowed their representative to occupy a status so inferior to that held by the Russian Consul, and constantly asked me why it was. The Sarts (Kashgarians) expressed their regret that our Agent was not in a position to withstand the growing influence of the Russian Consul with the Chinese, affirming that they were themselves feeling the influence he exercised in favour of Russian merchants and to their detriment.

Nor is the relative position between the representatives of Russia and of Great Britain only thus contrasted at Kashgar. By slow, yet sure, strides the Northern power has crept down towards the Oxus, each step taken with premeditation and precision, in face of the difficulties interposed by native opposition, severity of climate, and almost impossible paths. No barrier proved too strong for the Muscovite exploiters to surmount, no opposition too serious to overcome. The protests of the British Government proved of no more avail than the objections of the Chinese or the armed opposition of the Afghans. Beginning with the capture of the capital of Khokand in 1865, the whole of the Khanate was annexed under its old-world name of Ferghana in 1876, and thus Russia's limits reached the fringe of the Alai Valley, which was soon crossed in the direction of the Khargosh Pamir. Once on the Roof of the World, it was discovered that the entire region lay at the mercy of the first-comer, and a fort was erected at Murghabi, whence Captain Yonoff sallied forth with his Cossacks to patrol the Alichur and Great Pamirs. The opposition met

with was of the slightest. The nomadic Kirghiz, mere children of the desert, without ambition or education, took no note of the seizure of their hunting grounds. An awkward rencontre between Colonel Gromtchevski's expedition and Captain Younghusband, a scrimmage or two with Afghan outposts, and a fight in which sixteen Afghans were killed at Somatash in 1892, exhausts the catalogue. With their usual craving for territory, the Russians lay claim to all the Pamirs, and this demand, based on no justification beyond the impetuosity of the claimants, was practically conceded by the British Government, notwithstanding the far stronger right which China and Afghanistan could have shown both in point of conquest and occupation to the region comprised. The only question which arose related to the actual demarcation of the Pamir boundary, and this was in due course settled, as such questions always have been, by awarding to Russia the lion's share of the territory in dispute.

The Pamir boundaries as they exist to-day are as follows. On the north they adjoin the Provinces of Ferghana and Semirechinsk. On the north-west they infringe on the Khanate of Bokhara, nominally independent, but actually a suzerainty of the Russian throne. On the east the Pamirs are shared between Russia and China, the mountains of Sarikol and the Taghdumbash serving as a rough and ready boundary between the Russian Pamirs and Kashgaria, while on the south and south-west the territories of the Tsar adjoin those of the Ameer of Afghanistan.

The frontier line along this last has been fully surveyed, and failing the starting of some new quibble, is not likely to be infringed. The history of this boundary is interesting, inasmuch as it dates from the year 1872, in which year the famous Granville-Gortschakoff agreement was arrived at respecting the Russo-Afghan frontier. In Lord Granville's despatch defining the British Government's views as to the territories appertaining to the Ameer of Afghanistan, it is set out that "Badakshan with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikul (Wood's Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus (or Panja), forming the northern boundary of this

Afghan province throughout its entire extent—belong to the Ameer of Kabul."

This definition was accepted by Prince Gortschakoff on February 5, 1873, and the demarcation laid down was observed until four years ago, when the Russians succeeded in stirring up trouble between the people of Darwaz on the right bank of the Oxus and those of the same Khanate on the left. After a series of negotiations a treaty was concluded between Bokhara and Afghanistan, with the approval of Great Britain, of which the details have not been published, but which gave all Afghan territory on the right bank of the river to Russia, while Russia relinquished all claim to those portions of Darwaz on the left bank which were handed over to the rule of the Ameer.

The frontier east of Sarikul or Wood's Lake was still left undefined, and the disputes incidental to Captain Yonoff's expeditions on the Pamirs which culminated in the fight at Somatash, rendered it very desirable that this should be taken in hand. Accordingly, on March 11, 1895, a convention was drawn up between Russia and Great Britain for the demarcation of this frontier, and subsequently a Boundary Commission was appointed for the purpose, on which this country was represented by Major-General M. G. Gerard, C.B., C.S.I., assisted by Colonel Sir T. H. Holdich, C.B., C.I.E., Lieut.-Colonel R. A. Wahab, R.E., and Surgeon-Captain A. W. Alcock, M.B.; while the Russian Commissioners were General Pavalo-Shveikovski, Governor-General of Ferghana, Mons. Benderski, Colonel Zaleski, and Colonel Galkine. The joint Commissioners met on July 20, 1895, and the surveys necessary were completed and the pillars marking the topographical points fixed by September 12 following. The whole of the southern boundaries of the Pamir region were thus marked out, and the only frontier open to question was that on the east, where the respective claims of Russia and China had never been definitely adjudicated. All that is absolutely known on the subject is that the Russians have since then crossed the Alai Valley, pushed eastward quite as much as southward, and that there are to-day Russian posts established

at points which up till a few years ago were in the hands of the Chinese. As at present observed, the Russo-Chinese frontier starts from the Muzart Pass to the east of Issik Kul, and follows the crest of the Thian Shan range of mountains as far as the Turgat Pass near Chadir Kul. From here it coincides with the topmost ridge of the Kara-teke range, until it reaches Mount Maltabar in the Mustagh Tau. Hence it traverses the uplands which shut out the Pamirs proper from Kashgaria by way of the Uch Bel, Kara Art, Kizil Jik, Sari Tash, Berdish, Neza Tash, Karakoram, and Bayik Passes, until the regions of Sarikol and the Taghdumbash become merged in the valleys of the Mustagh range and the Chinese frontier borders that of Kunjut. The delimitation of this boundary rests entirely on occupation, and is likely at any moment to be disturbed by Russia, it being an open secret that the Muscovite agents in innermost Asia are only awaiting an opportunity to take possession of Kashgaria and its dependencies.

RUSSIAN KIRGHIZ FRONTIER GUARD

The point of greatest interest in respect to the Pamir region is the actual position held by Russia to-day, and thanks partly to the opportunities I have had for making observations and partly to the conversations I have enjoyed with M. Petrovsky, Captain Kevekiss, and other Russians on the spot, I am enabled to state this with some detail and precision.

The Russian Pamirs are divided into two Volasts or counties, which are as follows :

The Volast of the Pamirs, which includes Kara Kul-Murghabi, Rang Kul, Ak-tash, and Alichur.

The Volast of Kuhdarah, which includes Sarez and Kuhdarah.

The population of the first-named Volast is Kirghiz, while that of the second is almost entirely Tajik.

The first stronghold constructed by the Russians on the Pamirs proper was known as Fort Pamir, but has since been renamed Murghabi. It is situated at an altitude of 11,800 feet above the sea level, and stands on the right bank of the Murghab, some seventy miles south of Rang Kul on the eastern border of the Sarez Pamir. It was built of sods of earth and bags of sand by the men of the fourth battalion of the Turkestan army in 1892–3, and intended to check the forays which the Afghans and Chinese are said to have frequently indulged in against the people of Ferghana.

The moral effect of the establishment of Pamirski Post on the Chinese was considerable, and it was doubtless entirely due to the strength of the position taken up by the Russians that the Chinese consented to the agreement arrived at in 1894, for the cession of the Rang Kul Pamir and the region round the Aksu river to Russia. As soon as the Russians had established themselves at Murghabi they began exploiting the neighbouring Pamirs and quickly penetrated through Roshan and Shighnan to the Panja or Upper Oxus, and thus showed that their object in coming to the Pamirs was not so much the safeguarding of the frontier of Ferghana as the extension of their own borders. They next set about establishing communications with Marghilan, the site of the Government of Ferghana, to which the Pamirs region forms an annex. The country was accordingly surveyed and found, except in parts, to be fairly easy. A cart road was then constructed over the Kizil Art and Ak Baital passes, which rendered it possible to convey stores and munitions of war to Murghabi, which was made the headquarters and general depôt of the Pamir district.

As time went on and the Russians found that neither the nomadic Kirghiz or the Tajiks troubled about the new comers, they devoted themselves to examining the possibilities of further extending their sphere of action, and founded

a second post at Rang Kul, with a view to keeping an eye on the doings of the Chinese across the border, but it was soon found that the energies of the Russian Consul-General at Kashgar sufficed for the domination of the mandarins, and this post was deserted, a few Cossacks being stationed at Ak Tash on the western border of Sarikol, as being better suited for the purpose in view.

In 1896 it was decided to take the south-western borders of the Pamirs in hand, and a secret treaty was, as already stated, drawn up, by which all the territories on the right bank of the Panja or Oxus were transferred to Bokhara, while those which formerly appertained to Bokhara on the left bank of that river were handed over to Afghanistan. This arrangement gave to Russia the greater part of Darwaz and the whole of Roshan and Shighnan, and as soon as the transfer was complete the Russian authorities constructed the existing fort at Charog, to which the seat of the government of the Pamirs was removed.

The present Russian strength on the Pamirs is as follows :

CHAROG.—An extremely well-built fort of earth, stone and wood, which would withstand any bombardment likely to be brought to bear against it in a country where nothing heavier than a mountain battery could be conveyed. The fort is the headquarters of the officer in supreme military and political command on the Pamirs, including jurisdiction over the Bokhariot officers in Wakhan, Shighnan and Roshan. This post is at present held by Captain Kevekiss, who is a Swede. He has under him four officers and forty Cossacks, and possesses two Maxim guns, with stores and ammunition calculated to last for twelve months. There is a road from Charog to Murghabi which follows the valley of the Ghund Dara and the Alichur Pamir, which, though extremely rough, is traversed by baggage animals in eight days, and a cart road between these points is under construction.

MURGHABI.—This post has fallen from its erstwhile importance, and now takes a second place. It is placed in charge of a lieutenant, who has under him two officers, forty Cossacks, and one Maxim gun.

LANGAR KISHT is a small fort opposite Kala Panja on the Upper Oxus above Ishkashim. It is commanded by an officer who has at his disposal fifteen Cossacks and a Maxim.

AKTASH, at one time an important post, is now regarded mainly as an information station, being used as a means of collecting early intelligence of any movements on the Chinese frontier. Its garrison consists normally of six Cossacks.

KIZIL RABAT is a similar post held by a corporal's guard.

KILA WANJ.—There is a garrison of Bokhariots here.

When I arrived at Kala-i-Wamar and found myself under arrest, I deemed it wise to destroy a considerable proportion of my notes, for fear that their discovery might cause me to be suspected of being a spy. I am therefore compelled to omit many details which I had obtained, and which would have largely added to the value of these notes. I can, however, vouch for the following information, which I obtained partly as the results of observation and partly in conversation with the Russian officers I came across.

Everything I saw led me to the conclusion that the Russians attach the greatest importance to those portions of the Pamir region which border the Panja or Oxus, and it is here that the principal fort at Charog and the post at Langar Kisht is placed. Immediately on the opposite bank of the river are the Afghan forts of Kala Bar Panja, Iskashim, and Kala Panja, where the Afghans keep watch over their neighbours, and indulge in frequent nocturnal predatory expeditions. The Afghans are very adverse to their Russian neighbours, with whom they hold no communication. They are a rough lot, and the Pathans especially fanatical and untrustworthy.

The Bokhariots, who are largely employed by the Russians in the guarding of the Oxus frontier, are an unwarlike race of men, and appear to be thoroughly under Russian control. There is a garrison of a thousand of them at Kala Khum, at the northernmost bend of the river. I heard various statements respecting their appreciation of Russian rule, none of them flattering. According to Mir Ishan Kul Beg the Bokhariots are by no means pleased with the Russians. He states that, at the time of the Russian occupation of Bokhara, the country was split

up into different factions; otherwise, if they had been united, the Russians would not have found the Khanate such an easy conquest. The Bokhariots are, of course, much afraid of the Russians, and the Amir pretends to be a firm ally, but really is not. He says the Russian officials in Bokhara are extremely badly paid by their Government, and are eager to make all they can out of a people who are unable to resist any demands they choose to make. He states that, in the event of a war between the English and Russians, the sympathy of the Bokhariots would be with us, and that the Government of India could easily conclude an arrangement with the Amir ensuring his neutrality; and further that, if we assisted the Bokhariots with officers and material, they would undoubtedly lend us active assistance. They seem to have a high idea of the fairness and liberal treatment the native races subject to British rule enjoy, and recognise that it is not our wish to acquire fresh territory merely to enrich ourselves at the expense of the native inhabitants, as seems to be the case with the Russians.

The Bokhariots told me that there is a considerable intercourse with Chitral, and that the Chitralis all speak in highest terms of the treatment they receive from us; they report no "zulm," fair payments and justice. Formerly the Chitralis who visited this part of the Oxus were very poverty-stricken, but according to the Bokhariots there is a manifest improvement. I ascertained that there is no doubt some truth in the statements made by the Mimbashi Shur Chur, as to some agreement about Badakshan between the Russians and the Amir of Bokhara. The Beg told me that the Khokandis dislike the Russians intensely, and that at the time of the Russian occupation of Khokand one of the Khan's brothers fled to Peshawur, where he now lives. This man has a large following, and might under certain eventualities be of service.

From Karakul to the Kudara the country is very sparsely populated, there being not more than thirty houses in all this region. Below Kudara there are no Kirghiz, and the race of people called Tajik are met with.

The inhabitants of the Oxus valley apply this name Tajik indiscriminately to the people of Roshan, Darwaz, Shighnan, Wakhan, Chitral, Yasin, Kunjut, and the inhabitants of Sarikol other than Kirghiz. All these people speak varieties of the Wakhi language, and all understand each other; they resemble one another greatly in appearance and customs; they most of them understand Persian. The history of the Tajiks of Roshan and Shighnan appears to be as follows. Until the occupation of these valleys by the Amir of Afghanistan some fifteen years ago, these people were under their own Khans and formed an independent State, paying tribute to no one. The older Tajiks speak of three generations of Khans: first, Shah Wangi Khan; second, Abdurrheem Khan; third, Usphala Khan.

Up to the time of the deposition of Usphala Khan by the Amir of Afghanistan, the greater part of the Pamir as far as Karakul Lake, including Murghab, Alichur, and Khargosh, together with Roshan and Shighnan on both sides of the Oxus, paid tribute to Usphala Khan. There was a Tajik post stationed at Karakul Lake by Usphala Khan to levy toll on all traders entering the Pamir from the north who passed by the lake. I had some conversation with the Tajik who had formerly been in charge of the post, and he informed me that all traders paid him toll, and he likewise levied tribute on the Kirghiz. The residence and chief seat of the Tajik Khan was at Kala Bar Panj.

When Abdurrahman Khan became Amir of Afghanistan he conquered Badakshan, which country had hitherto been independent, and the members of whose reigning house had intermarried with the family of the Khans of Kala Bar Panj. He afterwards sent troops against Usphala Khan, but the latter fled to Khokand. Abdurrahman then sent messengers to him inviting him to return and retake possession of his country, which he promised to restore to him, and assuring him of his friendship and protection.

Usphala Khan thereupon returned, and afterwards, at the Amir's invitation, he paid a visit to Kabul with his headmen and family; here, however, he is said to have been seized, and

together with his family and 500 Tajiks, to have been buried alive. One son, Abdul Ghazi Khan, was spared, and he is now in Kabul. The Afghans then occupied the country, and levied taxes over all this country; they exercised much "zulm," and were detested by Tajiks and Kirghiz alike.

Shur Chor, the Mimbashi of Roshor village, gave me some interesting information. He informed me that until the Russian occupation of the Panja his family had for generations been regarded as Chiefs of the Bartang valley, and had been allowed by the Afghans, and previously by the Tajik Khans, to levy tribute in kind and money on all the villages between Tashkurgan and Kala-i-Wamar; this fact was afterwards confirmed by the Russian Commandant.

Owing, however, to the "zulm" and extortion practised by the officials of the Amir, the Tajiks of Roshan and Shighnan invited the Russians to take these valleys under their protection, and Shur Chor and his father were amongst the petty chiefs who visited Marghilan to arrange the matter with the Governor. The Russians, of course, were only too eager to extend their possessions from the Pamirs to the Panja, and with the aid of the Tajiks, who showed them the only possible roads in this most difficult country, and helped them with transport and supplies, they forced the Afghans to cross the Panja after the fight at Somatash, and later on a skirmish at Yaims, above Kala-i-Wamar.

The Tajiks affirm that but for their assistance the Russians would never have been able to effect an occupation of these valleys, and from what I have seen myself of the difficulties and dangers of these roads I can quite believe them.

For the assistance that they gave the Russians Shur Chor and his father received a number of Russian decorations from the Tsar, and were confirmed in their ancient rights in the Bartang. Some time after the occupation of Roshan (which apparently took place as late as four years ago) Shur Chor and his father were summoned to Murghabi, where various charges were brought against them of sending information of Russian movements to the officials of the British Government in Chitral or Gilgit. He was also charged with contemplating, together

with other Tajiks, a wholesale emigration to British territory. The Russian Commandant considered these charges to have been proved, and sentenced the Mimbashi and his father to be imprisoned at Murghabi. After some months an order came that the Mimbashi was to be released, and, together with other petty chiefs from the Tajiks, he was sent to St. Petersburg to attend the coronation of the Tsar as an honoured guest. Here he appears to have been made much of, and he received other decorations. When in St. Petersburg he petitioned the Tsar to restore to him the former possessions of his family in Roshan which had been forfeited, but was informed by one of the Ministers that this could not be done, as Roshan had been handed over to the Amir of Bokhara. He was allowed, however, to retain the village of Roshor.

According to Shur Chor an arrangement was entered into at this time between the War Minister and the Amir of Bokhara, by which the latter agreed to enter into negotiations with the Badakshis and the Tajiks on the left bank of the Oxus, with a view to inducing these people to eventually throw off their allegiance to Afghanistan and declare themselves as subjects of the Amir of Bokhara.

The Russian War Minister was unwilling to show his hand directly, and was anxious that the Amir of Bokhara should manage this matter himself, promising that all the country which might be seduced from Afghan rule should be handed over to Bokhara. It was supposed that if the Amir of Bokhara could not gain his object by intrigue, he could find a pretext for a quarrel with Abdurrahman, in which case the Bokhariot troops, drilled by Russian instructors and armed with modern weapons, would be found equal to the task of annexing Badakshan and the Afghan portions of Roshan and Shighnan. In case of a reverse, however, Russian assistance was promised. Five years are stated to have been the period agreed upon during which time the Amir of Bokhara had to carry out his agreement; and of this period some two years have now elapsed. The Mimbashi of Roshor and other petty chiefs were informed that if the Amir failed to carry out his bargain their possessions would be restored to them.

When the Russians handed over Roshan, Shighnan, and Wakhan to the Bokhariots, it was on the condition that no taxes should be levied for three years. Of this period two and a half years have now lapsed, and it is not known what changes may be instituted at the end of the third year. The people had been so impoverished under Afghan rule that this remission of taxes was a necessity. The Mimbashi affirms that the Bokhariots are intriguing with the Badakshis and Tajiks on the left bank of the Panja, and that Bokharan emissaries are constantly crossing the river secretly.

The Amir of Afghanistan has, he states, become aware that something of this kind is proceeding, for he has issued orders prohibiting all intercourse with the right bank of the Oxus, and has stopped the exportation of grain from Badakshan, thereby reducing the Tajiks on the right bank of the Panja to very great straits; the Afghan garrisons on the Upper Oxus have also been increased considerably.

This Mimbashi is intensely hostile to the Russians on account of the way he has been treated, and would be eager to help us in any way possible; he has considerable influence. Great scarcity, amounting in many places to a famine, prevails in Roshan and along the Oxus owing to a failure in the rains last year, and the proclamation of the Amir of Afghanistan prohibiting any import of grain from Badakshan.

The population of these valleys is too great for the area of land that can be cultivated. In Roshan money is little sought after, as little use can be made of it; the natives prefer trinkets of various kinds, and Yarkand felt numdahs are specially prized, otherwise Russian paper roubles are preferred to silver; Chinese silver, however, passes readily on the Russian Pamirs.

Mir Ishan Kul Beg is the name of the Bokharan Beg in civil charge of Roshan, Shignan, and Wakhan. He told me that, in the past ten years, 25,000 houses, Badakshis and Tajiks, have fled from Afghan territory into Bokharan. Last year 4000 houses crossed from Afghan Darwaz into Bokharan Darwaz. The Amir of Bokhara has issued a proclamation that he will give all refugees a safe asylum and land to cultivate, and that they will be free from taxation for four years. Most

of the refugees are settled in Darwaz. Roshan contains 400 houses, Shignan 1100, Wakhan 500—a house may be reckoned at from eight to ten inmates.

Badakshi traders bring horses, saddlery, puggarees, cotton goods, coral, tea, &c., from Peshawur, and take back sheep, goats, wool, puttoo, and paper roubles.

The Tajiks speak highly of an Englishman who visited the Oxus valley and penetrated as far as Tashkurgan in Roshan, some fourteen years ago during the Afghan occupation; they say that he promised them they should come under British rule. This must have been Ney Elias, whose report has never been published.

At the time of the British occupation of Chitral, Kevekiss was serving as a lieutenant on the Pamirs. He tells me that the Commandant of the Pamirsky post had actually received definite instructions to cross the Hindu Kush and occupy Chitral, but that our actions frustrated his plans. Only those people acquainted with the Russian capacity for intrigue can understand the evil effect that such a movement would have had on the neighbouring Pathan tribes and in the Punjab.

The Oxus from Charog to Kala-i-Wamar is traversed in summer by rafts made of inflated goat skins; in winter donkeys can ford the river; some snow falls, but not a great quantity. The Russians had got a report that the Afghans were going to build a fort at Ishkashim, or rather that English engineers were going to build it for them. They regard the relation of Afghanistan to ourselves as very similar to the position that Bokhara occupies under Russian influence, and talk of the former country as being under our suzerainty.

I gathered that very complete plans exist for an advance on Badakshan and Chitral from the Upper Oxus; the number of men that could move by each road has been calculated. Their idea is that the best road to Badakshan is Ishkashim, and that the best road to Chitral would also be the road starting from that place and turning off by Zebak and the Dorah Pass. There is also, they say, a fair road from Shikarf by which British territory is entered in a few hours; there is no Afghan post at this point. Another road *viâ* the Nuksam Pass is not so

good. The main advance from this portion of the Upper Oxus would apparently be made from Ishkashim and smaller parties would advance on Chitral by Zebak, Shikarf and the Baroghil Passes. The Kunjut road is considered quite out of the question.

The Tajiks told me that last year a Nogai (Tartar) officer disguised as a Tajik visited Chitral and brought back complete plans of that place. I asked Kevekiss if this was true, and he appeared much confused, but afterwards owned that it was. He told me that such a step was necessitated by the policy of the Indian Government in refusing Russian officers permission to cross the Indian frontier. The next day, however, he told me that it was not true that a Russian officer last year had visited Chitral. I have, however, my own opinion on the subject.

The system of espionage from Charog is very thorough. There are regular spies employed by the Chief Political Officer; they are paid at the rate of 25 roubles a month, and do nothing else but travel to and from Kabul and Chitral and occasionally visit Gilgit. These men are Tajiks, and as they precisely resemble the Chitralis it would be difficult to catch them; they keep the Russians exceedingly well informed of every matter of interest in Kabul and Chitral. One of these spies had brought back an excellent magazine rifle manufactured at Kabul.

Kevekiss states that he also gets good information from Yasin from the "Prime Minister of the Mehtar."

It appears that the plans for the invasion of Badakshan and Chitral from the Upper Oxus are a matter of common discussion at the dinner table of the Governor of Ferghana, and the officers at Charog told me that at Marghilan the present Russo-Afghan frontier of the Oxus is considered as a purely temporary arrangement, and likewise the boundary fixed by the Pamir Commission as by no means permanent. They affirm that in due course they will advance their frontier to the Hindu Kush on the south and cross the Oxus and occupy Badakshan. They anticipate that our Government will give way, and not dare to risk a war with them on behalf of the Amir.

They do not, however, recognise the possibility of the Afghans being anything else than opposed to themselves and fighting side by side with our troops, although they say that Abdurrahman is in constant correspondence with the Governor of Turkestan.

I found the dislike to the Russians pronounced amongst all classes of Mussulman Kirghiz and Tajiks equally, and the recent revolt at Andijan will not tend to lessen this feeling. This revolt had occasioned intense excitement on the Pamirs and in Roshan, and all kinds of rumours were afloat. Some Kirghiz returning from the Alai told me that they had heard that the Andijanis had appealed to Abdurrahman for aid; others told me that an Anglo-Afghan force had occupied Aktash and that the Russians had fled from Murghabi. Many other reports were prevalent, which were chiefly interesting in demonstrating the idea that every Mussulman of these parts seems to have that some day there must come an Anglo-Russian conflict, and that when it does come the Russian Mussulman subjects will be found on our side. These Tajiks and Kirghiz openly stated that if the Andijanis received any help from ourselves or from Kabul they would immediately join in the fray.

THE HEAD OF THE KIRGHIZ ON THE RUSSIAN PAMIRS

My impression is that this general dislike of the Russians is not so much due to excessive taxation as to the impossibility of obtaining fair justice. Russian officials are so badly paid that from highest to lowest they will, as a rule, take the side of the man who can offer them the largest bribe. This is my experience also in other portions of Russian Central Asia, and the Russians themselves do not deny taking bribes. They cannot live without them, they say, for neither civil nor military officers in charge of enormous districts receive any allowances for travelling, and therefore must get what they can out of the people. If I might make a suggestion to her Majesty's Government, I would say that there is no better way of gaining

the goodwill and friendship of the various races of Mussulmans in Central Asia than by encouraging in every way possible Englishmen to travel amongst them. By such methods Government is put to no expense, and the natives readily appreciate the difference between an Englishman, be he sportsman or scientific traveller, who, one may say, is invariably a man of some means and pays his way liberally, and a Russian, who will probably be an official, or, if a private individual, will be armed with an official "parwana," the possession of which places him at once on a par with an official, and makes it obligatory on the natives to supply all his wants "by order."

I have been greatly surprised at the goodwill evinced everywhere I have been, by Russian Mussulman subjects, to myself as an Englishman, and the idea generally prevalent that some day they will be on our side against their conquerors is a curious one to note. I need hardly point out the advantages to be gained by ourselves in having the Mussulmans in Ferghana and Turkestan on our side, and the great disadvantages the Russians would labour under if such a state of affairs came about.

In an advance on Chitral and Badakshan, the Kirghiz of Ferghana, in which I include the Pamirs, would be called upon to supply many thousands of camels, ponies, and yaks, also sheep; if they were unwilling to do so and drove their animals away into the mountains, or if we had been able to distribute a certain quantity of arms amongst them and the Tajiks, the Russians would find themselves in a bad way for transport and supplies, and would experience very great trouble from these admirable horsemen on their lines of communication. No doubt also for an advance from the Lower Oxus huge numbers of animals would be requisitioned from Turkestan and the Steppes, and in the latter province I can certify that the prevailing spirit among the Kirghiz is as distinctly hostile as elsewhere. The presence of a few Englishmen selected for the purpose would ensure these people presenting a hostile attitude to the Russians in the event of a war with ourselves.

I have been frequently asked if our Government is on good terms with the Sultan of Turkey, and have of course always

replied in the affirmative, as all these Mussulmans, be they Tartars, Sarts, Kirghiz, or Tajiks, look to the Sultan as their head, and by his wishes they are much influenced. These people have, indeed, said to me, "If the Sultan is on your side we will all assist the 'Ferang' and sweep the Russians off the face of the globe."

It will, I think, be admitted that the goodwill of these races of Mussulmans, even if they are not in a position to render us active assistance, may be of great importance to ourselves in the event of a war with Russia. It would seem therefore advisable that we should frame our policy so as to maintain as friendly relations as possible with the Porte. Time alone can show the benefits that we may derive from such a policy.

The population of the Russian Pamirs is roughly 2000 souls, and the expenses of the occupation 100,000 roubles annually. The territory is of course run at an actual loss, since it returns nothing for the expenditure, and the question naturally arises, Why does Russia continue the experiment?

The explanation, though not hard to find, does not appear to be generally understood. I do not know whether it is the keen sense of straightforward dealing and fair play inherent to the British race which makes it difficult for Englishmen to believe in the duplicity of Russian methods, or whether we possess an innate tendency to emulate the ostrich and refuse to see that which strikes us as being an unpleasant sight. But the fact remains that only a very small minority of our politicians and publicists appear rightly to appreciate the policy of Russia, the majority refusing to look facts squarely in the face and, to quote a happy phrase, intelligently anticipate events. The widely spread confidence exhibited at the outset towards the recent Peace Conference at the Hague may be taken as a case in point, and the spectacle of a large proportion of the educated community anticipating a tangible result from so Quixotic and manifestly absurd a scheme as a friendly understanding between nations at peace which should continue to hold good in time of war, supplied material the reverse of encouraging to the student of *la haute politique*. Of all the

writers who have contributed to our knowledge of Russian affairs, I know of only four who have fearlessly and rightly gauged the facts, and of these only one had held an official position. They are Sir Henry Rawlinson, Arminius Vambéry, Charles Marvin, and Alexis Krausse; and their warnings, many of them long since justified, have persistently been allowed to fall on deaf ears. To dip into Sir Henry Rawlinson's delightful essays is to read a series of prophecies long since fulfilled; to study Marvin's "Herat," to realise the opportunities which have been wasted in the past; while Mr. Krausse returns to the charge with far-sighted enthusiasm, and points out how the mistakes of the past may yet be retrieved and the dangers of the future overcome.

The rewards conferred on these thinkers consist for the most part of abuse. To unmask the wiles of the Muscovite diplomat is to avow oneself a "Russophobe," a hater of Russians, whose views must be prejudiced, and whose opinions are full of error. However logical the reasoning of the politician may be, whatever his original standpoint, though he justify his charges up to the hilt and over, his conclusions being uncomplimentary to our much protesting friend and ally, justify his being charged with narrow-minded prejudice, with petty spite; and in the result we dub the thinker Russophobe.

If to avow a keen dislike for methods which are mean and despicable constitutes a Russophobe, then do I willingly avow myself such, for I fail to see why we should condone, under the "enlightened rule" of Russia, actions which under British sway would be regarded as crimes. I have only recently returned from a sojourn of many months in the heart of innermost Asia, where the growth of Russian sway is yet in full swing. I have wandered free and unattended among the peoples who have come under Muscovite dominion, and seen how they are treated. I have conversed with Russian officers, and heard from their lips enunciations of the principles they cherish, and I do not flinch from saying that my nature revolts from what I have seen. The rule of Russia, not perhaps the coded regulations which have the sanction of St. Petersburg, but the rule as practised on the races of Central Asia, is a

degraded absolutism, the absolutism of petty tyrants who, invested with authority they are ill qualified to exercise, are driven by the poorness of their pay and their lack of *morale* to bribery, corruption, and excesses of the worst kind. While the people are thus made absolutely subject to their rulers' desires, nothing is done to develop the country or aught but to build forts, to strengthen the defences, and to prepare strategic positions for further encroachments. If my avowal of my creed constitutes me a Russophobe, then Russophobe let it be; but I have arrived at my view only after some opportunities for observation, and I take my stand on all I have said.

The object of Russia in her occupation of the Pamirs was to obtain a vantage ground from which, time and opportunity offering, a descent might be made on other and more desirable realms. The scheme, brilliant in its inception, was ably developed; and Russia holds the whole of innermost Asia in her hand without having lost a life in the attainment. In itself the Pamirs is a white elephant. Unproductive, lacking in communications, destitute of settled population, endowed with a severe climate, the region constitutes merely a source of expenditure without hope of return. As a fulcrum on which to work the lever of expansion, however, the Pamirs are likely to prove of the utmost possible value, for, commanding Kashgaria on the one side and Badakshan on the other, they afford the means for the acquisition of both.

The plea so frequently put forward by Russian writers that the Hindu Kush, with its prolongation the Koh-i-Baba and Siah Koh ranges, is the true geographical frontier of the Russian Empire is no idle talk. It is a fact which has long been accepted by Russian geographers, and formally adopted by the officers of the General Staff. It is no mere question of the annexation of Herat or the cession of Balkh. It is a mighty principle which to-day forms the leading item in the Russian programme for future progress, and embraces the occupation of the whole of northern Afghanistan, including the old-time Khanates of Herat, Balkh, Kunduz, Badakshan, Bamian, and all that territory known as Afghan Turkestan. Nor is this aim an idle dream. It has been in course of development ever

since the Frontier Commission of 1887 gave to Russia the valleys round the river Kushk, and its realisation cannot be much longer delayed. For treaties, frontiers, and pledges notwithstanding, Russia will attain her aim, and within another decade Cossack regiments will look down on Kabul from their barracks on the heights of Kohistan. Already are the bases being prepared on either hand. With a military post at Kushk connected by a railway with Merv and the military bases of Turkestan, and a series of forts along the Upper Oxus, where Russia already dominates the one-time Afghan tributaries of Roshan, Shighnan and Darwaz, it will be an easy matter to throw an overwhelming force along the banks of the river between Kala Khum and Kwaja Salar. It is only the opportunity which is lacking, and excuses can be made. The means are there, and speculation as to the result would be futile.

As regards the attitude of the Afghan people opinions vary. There are those who hold that, weary of the thievish oppression of their rulers, the Pathans would gladly throw over the Kabul throne in exchange for the Russian yoke. Others incline to the belief that their national love of fighting would prompt them to harass the Russians in every way, and of their ability to considerably handicap the invaders in the occupation of their country there can be no two opinions. But the ultimate result is foredoomed, and even if we were to join forces with the Afghans—a doubtful contingency—the British strength in India would not permit our sending an army of sufficient size into Afghan Turkestan in time to forestall the Russian advance.

The acquisition of Sarikol, the Tagdumhash, and later Kashgaria and the rest of Chinese Turkestan, is an even simpler matter. In that direction Russia is not likely to experience opposition other than the exorcism of the Chinese braves and the mild protests of the Indian Government. It rests only until the needful opportunity occurs, an opportunity which is being cautiously cultivated by a judicious stirring up of the Sarts in opposition to the rapacious Chinese rule. So soon as the people of Kashgaria rise against their nominal rulers the Russians will take up their quarrel and, under the pretext of

coming to their rescue and seeing their grievances righted, will annex the country, as was done in the case of Kulja in 1871.

I am perfectly well aware that the above statement will be disputed by many, and that if brought under the notice of the authorities at St. Petersburg it will be indignantly denied. But this does not affect the facts one iota. Russian diplomatists are always prepared to deny anything which is urged in relation to their intentions, and one only has to refer to the official correspondence published in the Blue Books relating to such matters as the conquest of Khiva, the taking of Samarkand, the dishonouring of the Persian frontier or the acquisition of Merv, to understand that the word of a Russian minister is absolutely valueless. While Count Schouvaloff was conducting his special mission to London and assuring Lord Salisbury that the Russian Government had no intention of sending an expedition from the Caspian to occupy Merv, Lomakin was under orders to march against the Tekkes, and Alikhanoff had actually departed on his secret mission to coerce the Mervli. While repeated pledges were given to our Government in the name of the Tsar Alexander II. that Russia would not annex the oases of the Lower Oxus, Kaufmann was making active preparations for the subjugation of Khiva, just as the preparations for the seizure of Port Arthur and Talienwan were masked by a series of specious statements respecting the temporary anchoring of the Russian fleet in Chinese waters.

Russian assurances may be safely regarded as absolutely worthless, and the sensible statesman judges Muscovite intentions rather by the light of such reliable information he may be able to obtain from independent sources than from the quibbling announcements of unscrupulous ministers. The shameless disregard of truth so apparent among Russian statesmen is not so much the outcome of Muscovite diplomacy as the manifestation of the Russian character. The Russian is a born intriguer. The tracking of men, the evasion of the law, and the pitting of his wits against those of his fellows is the favourite pastime of the modern Slav; and no Russian would think of attaining his ends by outspoken and straightforward methods when a policy of evasion and deceit will enable him

to beguile his opponent and afterwards boast of how he has placed him at a disadvantage. It is just this trait in the Russian character which is not understood in this country, and to it is largely due the erroneous appreciation of the Muscovite which so generally obtains.

Apart from the insistency of the Russian programme in so far as it points to extension in Central Asia, there are other causes which tend to hang on the Muscovite advance. Most prominent of these is the condition of service which obtains in the Russian army, which has so often been directly responsible for the disregard of treaties and the premature enlargement of spheres. Excepting in the Guards, the Russian officer is not as a rule a man of large means. He adopts the army as a career as the only one likely to serve as a road to distinction, and having entered the profession, is all agog for opportunities of advancement. From the Russian officer's point of view, St. Petersburg and Moscow are the joint paradises where life is desirable, but existence in either is costly, and the regiments which are quartered in the capitals are those which the majority of the Tsar's supporters cannot enter. So the bulk of the regimental officers find their way to the outlying cities of the empire, to Poland or the Crimea, to Finland or the Caucasus, and count the years go by in their anxious watch for chances of distinction. There is one outlet for the energy of such men. In Asia the number of men required is constantly increasing, and the opportunities for advancement are correspondingly enlarged. The life is a dreary one at best, but it has its compensations. Opportunities of adding to the insufficient pay are to be found, the people are as the slaves of the military man, posts are constantly going which carry with them power as well as increased income, and then there is always the chance of an expedition which may bring glory to the individual! Accordingly there are always plenty of men ready to volunteer for service in Asia and the frontier posts along the Oxus, and the governments of further Siberia teem with men whose one hope is for the outbreak of hostilities, in order that they may return to Moscow or St. Petersburg with added reputation.

Is it remarkable that in face of such a state of things the Russian officer is always on the look-out for an excuse to attack the people just across the frontier? It is due to the circumstances set down that Kaufmann slaughtered the Yomuds at Khiva, that Lomakin butchered the women and children at Dengeel Tepe, and that Komaroff set upon the Afghans at Aktapa. The same explanation accounts for the onslaught on the people of Kwaja Sala and the scrimmage with the Pathans at Somatash. The commanding officer in each case without orders fell upon an inferior force and slaughtered them in order that he might be able to transmit to the authorities at St. Petersburg an account of a "battle" in which his prowess had ensured a victory for Russia, and added another slice to her domain.

And so it is to-day. Every officer in Central Asia is constantly on the alert for an excuse to fall upon the people across the frontier. No secret is made of the fact, and each and every officer I met during my recent travels discussed with me his chance of making an excuse for a brush with "the enemy," while the slightest piece of news which seems to offer a chance of trouble is received with open delight. While I was at Charog the intelligence of the appointment of General Kuropatkin came to hand, and the whole garrison was overjoyed for the reason that his appointment was regarded a sign of a commencement of a policy of renewed activity on the Russo-Afghan frontier.

The fact which struck me more than any other in relation to the Russian occupation of innermost Asia was the extraordinary intelligence and amount of accurate information on military and political matters possessed alike by the civil and military officials. I found that the officers in the furthest corners of the Pamirs were thoroughly well posted not only in matters relating to their command and surroundings, but on subjects connected with regions far away, and I was greatly impressed by the fact that these men, situated hundreds of miles from civilisation and surrounded by ranges of snow-clad mountains, which often effectually shut them off from communication with the outer world, were well

posted not only in the latest news but also in the most recent literature, and I have not the slightest doubt that within a few weeks of its publication this volume will find its way to the library of the general staff at Marghilan, and thence in due course will be forwarded for the perusal of my friends at Charog. I only hope that they will realise that while, as the result of having kept my eyes open, I am utterly opposed to the methods employed by the Russian authorities for the Russification of the natives of innermost Asia, I realise that the system is one which emanates from headquarters, and that in carrying it out they are only doing their duty.

On one point I confess that I admire the Russian method in contradistinction to our own. Possessed of the most perfect underground system in the world, the Russians know that there is no secret so closely guarded as to be impenetrable, and appreciating this fact, and ignoring the density of the so-called "intelligence" departments of our own public offices, they make no pretence of concealing any information which may be of general value. Thus the Russian maps, the general staff maps especially, are not only far in advance of our own in point of detail and up-to-date information, but they are published at an absurdly low cost, and can be obtained by anybody so inclined either at St. Petersburg or at Moscow. Nor in the case of information is there any mystery made. I have no doubt but that the Russian War Department is richly stocked with confidential reports which have not been and are not likely to be published, but it is amusing to remark that reports which are pigeon-holed at our Foreign Office, and which, being regarded as confidential, are not published, are well known to Russian officers, and their purport, if not their whole contents, freely discussed. An amusing case in point cropped up in Kashgar. Before starting on my journey I had taken some pains to obtain a copy of the report drawn up by Mr. Ney Elias of his mission to Chinese Turkestan in 1885. This report has never been published, and the friend through whom I made my application in London was informed that the document was strictly confidential, and that its contents could not be disclosed without a special permit from the Secretary of

State for India. In Kashgar I was told all about Mr. Elias's expedition, and was even informed of the tenor of his report, which dwells mostly on the status of the Sarts, Kirghiz and Tajiks, and bears testimony to the readiness of the people to welcome a British suzerainty with a view to free themselves from the thievishness of their Chinese and Afghan oppressors without incurring the equally undesirable infliction of the drastic Russian terrorism. I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the summary thus presented, but on the face of it it seems very near the mark, and on the strength of the correctness of other pieces of information I gathered in the same place, I am strongly inclined to regard it as reliable. It is certainly remarkable that the Russians began to exhibit renewed activity in the Pamir region about the time the report was presented, and that their land-grabbing on the borders of Sarikol was coincident with the receipt of the information I have repeated.

One other instance of the extent of Russian information may interest the reader. I had on more than one occasion come across a statement in the press to the effect that the Ameer of Afghanistan had assisted the Afridis during the Tirah campaign with rifles and supplies. The statement raised a howl of disbelief in this country, and at least one writer who repeated it was indignantly attacked and discredited. While at Charog I was astonished during a discussion on the Afghan frontier question with Russian officers there, to hear the commandant enlarge upon the mistake the English made in placing reliance on the goodwill of Abdurrahman, and on my expressing my surprise at his statement, he frankly told me with a smile that it was undoubtedly true that he had on many occasions received secret Russian emissaries at Kabul, and that he corresponded regularly with the Governor-General of Turkestan at Tashkend. They told me that the friendly feeling evinced by the Ameer towards Russia was not relied on, as the ruler of Afghanistan was not to be trusted, and would sell his dearest friend if he thought it worth his while to do so, but that it was well worth while maintaining the show of goodwill, as the periodic visits of Russian officers to Kabul were very useful in

keeping the authorities in Central Asia posted as to Afghan affairs. A captain of the Turkestan irregular cavalry happened to be at Kabul at the outbreak of the Afridi campaign, and he reported on his return that he had himself heard the distribution of rifles among the Afridis discussed among the Ameer's personal retainers, and that the episode had struck him as being an excellent joke.

I was greatly impressed by this statement, and subsequently made inquiries as to its likelihood, and in the result I may state that the evidence I obtained was so overwhelming that I believe it implicitly. The Tajiks at Kala-i-Wamar knew of the incident as a matter of common gossip, and the Beg there told me that when on a visit to Ishkashim he had seen a stand of rifles which had been taken from some Afridi tribesmen, who had been caught endeavouring to cross the river at night. They were modern weapons and bore the Kabul mark. Since my return home I have made further inquiries, and a gentleman whose word is altogether above suspicion (he went all through the Afridi campaign as correspondent for one of the London daily papers) assured me that the treachery of the Ameer was undoubted, and that numbers of Afghan rifles had been captured in their hands ; that the fact was well known to most of the officers engaged in the expedition, but that by the special instruction of the authorities the matter had been kept secret.

It is no great wonder that with so many points of superiority, Russia holds the whole of innermost Asia in the hollow of her hand. Possessing better information than ourselves, recklessly insistent in her programme, served by men who know neither fear nor moral scruple, and unhampered by the thousand anxieties which beset the British hierarchy, Russia knows her power, and lacks only that excuse which, when it comes along, will be eagerly seized with the view of calming the fears which would be aroused among ourselves were she to take her final stride to-day. The snare has long been set, and the quarry is at her mercy. At any moment she can seize her prey; and close her hand on what remains of innermost Asia outside the limits she has already set around her own.

KIZIL RABAT

CHAPTER XIII

THE FUTURE OF INNERMOST ASIA

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly dying fire.

TENNYSON

KASHGAR STREET SCENE

CHAPTER XIII

THE FUTURE OF INNERMOST ASIA

Present condition of Kashgaria—Governmental methods—Corruptness of the Bais—Forcible loans—Chinese justice—Future of the country—Position of the British Agent—British frontier rule—Trade routes to Kashgar—Scarcity of Indian goods—Tea—Cost of Transit—Perils of the Karakorum route—Great Britain the greatest Mohammedan country—British policy in Innermost Asia—Certainty of Russian advance—Financial position of Russia—Her ultimate fate.

IN order rightly to estimate the probabilities in respect to the future of innermost Asia it is necessary to examine separately each of the factors which come into play in that region. The conditions under which Russia exercises her dominion in the Pamir region have already been explained, and in one part of my experiences I have referred to the influences exercised by that country in Kashgaria, but I have so far said little respecting the system of rule which obtains in Chinese Turkestan, and on this subject I now propose to throw a little light.

Eastern or Chinese Turkestan, which includes the old districts of Turfan and Little Bokhara, contains an area of 431,800 square miles, with a population of 580,000. The people are largely of mixed race, and comprise Chinese, Mongols, Kalmuks, Kirghiz, Usbegs, Tajiks, and Sarts, a heterogeneous mixture whose characteristics are indolence and low moral tone. The government is entirely in the hands of the mandarins, who are subject to the authorities at Peking, and their rule is marked by a mixture of knavery and supineness which combine to bring about what is probably the most corrupt form of government in existence.

As an instance of the methods followed by the Government of Kashgaria I may cite a proclamation which was issued by the Taotai during my stay there, in which it was notified that, for the benefit of the people who were his dear children and whose interests he placed before every other consideration, orders had been given that grain for seed should be issued to all cultivators of land, varying in amount according to their holdings. On the face of it it seemed an extremely laudable action, for at this time of year grain is naturally dear; but it was soon evident that the Kashgaris were not overjoyed at the announcement. On investigation it appeared that the conditions on which this advance of grain was to be made were somewhat onerous: the peasants were obliged to take the grain from the Administration "by order," and whether they wanted it or not; for this privilege they were to pay at the rate of four tungas per charuk, which is the same thing as tenpence for twenty pounds; the bazaar rate at the time was three tungas per charuk. In return for this privilege they were to return a similar weight of grain to the Government military granaries after the harvest, when they would be repaid at the rate of two tungas per charuk. The Government were, therefore, to make 150 per cent. in about four months' time on their original outlay. To make matters worse, I was told the unfortunate peasants were not likely to receive the full amount of the grain they had paid for; it would be weighed out in bulk by a Chinese official of low grade, whose measures are notoriously false, and who has to make something for himself

before the grain is handed over to the Bais, or headmen of the villages, who, in turn, take their toll before distributing it. My informant, who has spent sixteen years in Kashgar, told me that certainly a quarter, and probably more, of the total weight of grain will never reach the peasants' hands. These Bais are, perhaps, the worst part of the Chinese Administration; everything is left in their hands, and, though Kashgaris themselves, they prey on the people like vultures.

I have made some inquiries about this curious method of replenishing cheaply the Government granaries; but I am told by those who should know that such customs are usual enough throughout the Celestial Empire. About the same time the Yarkand Amban issued a proclamation, of which a copy was shown to me and translated for my benefit, raising a Government loan of 6000 yambas (about £60,000) in his district; the people were then ordered to subscribe in amounts varying from 100 yambas for a rich Bai to six taels (about £1) for a poor man; the interest was to be 5 per cent. guaranteed by the Chinese Government, who would issue the scrip as soon as the silver reached Pekin. The silver will certainly take six months to reach the capital, and how long it will be before the people receive their bonds it is impossible to say. Probably they will never receive any paper at all; but, even if they do, the bonds are to be made out in the names of the Bais, who will certainly take a fair percentage of the interest due before handing it over to the people.

These are only two cases, but I could mention many other similar instances. The fact is that the Chinese Administration in Turkestan is nothing else but plain and open robbery: these Bais, in whose hands lies all the interior administration, are a pack of rapacious scoundrels; but woe betide an unfortunate peasant or merchant who appeals to a Chinese mandarin to get redress of his grievances. I will show what redress he will get.

A short time ago a man came from Yarkand to appeal to the Taotai, as the chief magistrate, against certain actions of the Yarkand Amban. The Taotai, who will never take any responsibility on his own shoulders, promised to do what he

could, and sent the man back to Yarkand. When he arrived there the Amban had him seized and severely flogged, the man receiving 1000 lashes for daring to petition against the Amban.

One would naturally ask how it is that the people do not rise and expel this iniquitous Government; but the reason is very apparent: they have no leaders to make a head, for the Bais are far too contented with their present position, in which they are allowed to plunder the people to their heart's content, to agitate for any change of Government. So long as they keep the Chinese well supplied with money and do not bother them, no questions are asked, for the Chinese maxim is, above all things, "anything for a quiet life."

MR. MACARTNEY, THE BRITISH AGENT IN KASHGAR

A revolt will probably some day occur. When it does, the Russians will step in "to maintain order on their frontier," and will absorb the whole of Kashgaria. No resistance can or will be offered by the people, who will not object; the Bais will be the only persons who will not appreciate the change, for their wings will be clipped. The Chinese will run away as fast as they can, and a few sotnias of Cossacks will suffice to complete the conquest of this very large province.

I have already referred to the equivocal position in which Mr. Macartney, the guardian of British interests at Kashgar, is placed. The readiness with which the British Government swallows the repeated snubbings accorded by the insolent Chinese to its representative have long made our statesmen ridiculous and Mr. Macartney's position intolerable. But worse than this, the situation has not been wasted on the Chinese, who themselves sneer at the weakness and vacillation of successive British Governments, and state openly that the reason we do not make a stand for better treatment is because we are afraid of the influence possessed by Russia.

On the Pamirs the Kirghiz and Sarikolis constantly asked how it is that the Russians are allowed a free hand in Kashgar and Yarkand, and why Mr. Macartney is not made Consul, or, at all events, placed on a better footing; for these people fear, too, the effect of Russian influence exerted over the Chinese in their direction.

The action of the Yarkand Amban in March last in reversing a decision of Macartney's in an arbitration case between two British subjects has been unfavourably commented upon far and wide, as was also his fining certain British subjects who had presented petitions to Mr. Macartney, and threatening them with flogging and other penalties should they ever dare to present him petitions again or show any civilities to English travellers.

In July last there was still much talk going on about this matter in Sarikol, no news of any redress had been received, and the natives generally expressed their astonishment that our Government could put up with such insult to its representative. I need hardly point out how injurious it is to British prestige that such treatment of our Agent can be possible. Reports of this action of the Amban's have circulated all over the Pamirs; and through Badakshi and Afghan traders, of whom there are numbers in Yarkand and Kashgar, have been carried on to the Oxus; for Captain Kevekiss asked me about it at Charog.

If her Majesty's Government fully realised the intolerable position in which their representative is placed, open as he is, and powerless to defend himself against Russian intrigues, leading to insult from the Chinese (the Munshi attached to the agency in Kashgar was some time ago half murdered by the Chinese soldiery), I cannot help feeling that steps would be taken to alter his status and either give him ull Consular powers or oblige the Chinese to accord him official recognition. I might add that the fact that Mr. Macartney has no official uniform to wear, although he appears to have done excellent work in the Political Department of the Indian Government, does not help to raise him in the estimation of the Chinese officials in Turkestan, who regard

the wearing of Government uniform as a most important matter.

As a governmental machine the Chinese bureaucracy is absolutely hopeless. The system on which it depends is one of compensation, so adjusted as to give the least possible trouble to the authorities. The Taotai, or supreme head of the district, is appointed during the pleasure of the Emperor, and his duties, in so far as they come within the ken of Peking, consist in the periodical despatch of a suitable sum of money representing the taxes collected. So long as this important duty is duly performed, and provided that the sum sent is not less than the average remitted by the Governor's predecessor, he is not interfered with, and the only other point insisted on is that he shall govern his province without troubling the authorities at the capital. In the event of a rising occurring among the people he is expected to quell it with the forces at his disposal. If the trouble extends and necessitates the Grand Council bestirring itself, the Taotai or Viceroy at the seat of the trouble is peremptorily dismissed and his post conferred on a military commander, whose ideas of war are as a rule restricted to the shooting of arrows and the making of faces in order to frighten the enemy. It is, of course, all very funny, but the result is not satisfactory, and, in the case of a Power which has immense interests at stake in the country, but, like Great Britain, consistently neglects its opportunities, disastrous.

The outcome of such a system is to offer a premium on corruptness. The Taotai collects all the taxes he is able to and remits the smallest proportion of the resultant which he thinks will suffice to satisfy the expectations at Peking. All that is over he keeps, and it is therefore to his advantage to collect as much as he can. It must also be borne in mind that in China, where corruptness permeates all classes from the highest to the lowest, advancement, like other marketable commodities, is bought and sold, and that the Taotai has probably paid a very large sum, often equal to several years' gains, in order to obtain his post. As his appointment is apt to be cancelled at a moment's notice by a stroke of the vermilion pencil, it follows that he must hasten to make money while he can, and lose no oppor-

tunity of extorting bribes from those beneath him. As with the Taotai, so with his subordinates. The General commanding the ruffianly army, the Shangwan, the Amban, and the numerous other grades of lesser functionaries all work on the same lines, with the result that nothing is done which is not specially paid for, and the people are plundered in order that their rulers may grow rich.

My opportunities for studying the Chinaman at home have taught me that there is only one means by which he can be satisfactorily dealt with. The calls of duty have no claim on him. Honour he does not know. Commercial morality is an unknown quantity, and he has never heard of the Sixth Commandment. But through his sense of fear it is possible to appeal to a Chinaman, and by a judicious—and pretty constant—use of this means Russia has long enjoyed a dominion of the Celestial hierarchy.

This fact is appreciated by no one more clearly than by the Chinese, and this tends to make them the more contemptuous in their conduct towards this country. They argue that force being the only measure worthy of respect, they bow to Russian threats, which they know will be followed up by acts; and while they disregard the mild protestations, unsupported by aught but words, of England, they exhibit a most profound contempt for a country which, by refusing to make a stand, shows its terror of the all-conquering Muscovite.

And so Chinese rule continues in Kashgaria under the patronage of the Russian Consul-General, until the psychological moment arrives for the Cossacks to occupy the country, when the Chinese will speedily depart to make way for a military governor-general of Eastern Turkestan.

The prime factor to be taken into consideration in this connection is of course the attitude which this country is likely to take in the contingency looked for; and I am compelled to own with shame that the only possible expectation is that we shall do nothing at all. Protests will naturally be made, and reams of official paper be covered with despatches, notes, and requests for explanation. The explanations desired will as usual be forthcoming, for where fair words will

serve Russian diplomatists are always ready to oblige; but the course marked out by the Muscovite exploiter will be followed to the letter, fair words notwithstanding; and if our action in the past may be taken as any criterion of our action in the future, we shall sulkily climb down and reconcile ourselves as best we may to the latest Russian extension as we take peeps at the huge camp which will be constructed just over the Mustagh and the Hindu Kush.

The methods of the British Government in regard to the further frontiers of India are indeed peculiar. The reader who has followed the incidents of my journey out and home will have been struck by the eccentric system under which the Gilgit road is controlled, how travellers, whose identity is thoroughly well known to the authorities, are kept kicking their heels about at Hunza or at Gilgit, while the authorities at Calcutta or at Simla are considering the advisability of permitting them to return to their native land. And this practice is not the exception, but the rule. The whole system in force on this outermost highway of India is contrary to common sense. It would most surely be wiser to encourage travellers to cross the frontier, at their own risk, of course, and to make observations among the tribes beyond the mountains, as well as to accustom the Pathans, the Sarts, the Kirghiz, and the Tajiks to the sight of Englishmen, than to regard the shortest route between India and innermost Asia as a sort of secret passage which is closed to all except the initiated. And yet it is so closed, and the only route available for travellers, sportsmen and traders is that from Leh across the Karakorum.

The effect of this system on commerce between India and Kashgaria is simply disastrous, and calls for some consideration. If I remember rightly, Marco Polo called Kashgar the city of merchants. And the people deserve the name, for they think nothing of making a journey of ten or more miles to make a profit of sixpence, and return afterwards to their homes quite contented with their day's work.

Kashgar, a large town of some 40,000 inhabitants, is the real centre of the western oasis in the deserts of sand on the

one side and naked rocks and arid mountains on the other, and the products of this very fertile oasis find their way to its bazaar in all forms—wheat, barley, Indian corn, rice, millet, beef, mutton, all kinds of vegetables and fruits beyond description in quantity, quality, and variety, in exchange for which are taken, almost exclusively, cotton goods. These Kashgarian shops, where cottons are sold, if put in a row would extend to five or six miles, and they are so overstocked (I am talking of Yarkand and Khotan also) that one can see they are anxious to secure a long future.

It is really marvellous to find nowadays that stubborn pushing on of Hanseatic enterprise in Kashgar, for all that cotton has been slowly and patiently brought from Moscow. There are two principal trade roads from Moscow to Kashgar. The old road was over Nishni Novgorod to Tumen, from Tumen over Obi and Irtish to Semipalatinsk, thence by cart caravans to Vierny, and then per camel or horse caravan to Aksu and Kashgar. Take a map and see what enormous distances that flowery threepenny handkerchief has come. There is another and better or cheaper road by rail to Andijan and thence per horse caravan to Kashgar. By the last route the transport from Moscow to Samarkand amounts to two roubles per pood (4*s.* 2*d.* per 36 lbs.). As far as the end of the railway there are no great difficulties, but between Osh or Marghilan or Andijan—three places not very far from one another—and Kashgar we are again on a road of which Europe has no more any remembrance. One ought to call it prehistoric, or antediluvian, to convey an adequate idea. The distance for caravan horses is only twelve or sixteen days, but passes such as the Therek-dawan, or even the Alai, are not to be taken for roads; there is not, in most places, even an attempt at a road; horses make their own path in the snow according to the conditions of the weather and season. This caravan road is open all the year round, and when in summer time the melting snow makes the Therek-dawan impracticable the caravans make the circuit over the Alai, which is two or three days longer but not so steep. A horseload on these roads is eight pood or 288 pounds, and the transport per pood

costs only one rouble; so taking the remaining distance between Osh and Samarkand at one-half rouble, the through transport between Moscow and Kashgar might be placed at three and a half roubles per pood.

Now after the fatigues and troubles, risks and casualties of that horrible passage between Osh and Kashgar there comes the first consolation for the enterprising merchant. For every pony load (eight pood) which crosses the frontier the Russian Government pays him a reward or bounty of sixteen golden roubles,* so that after all his troubles he may sell his cottons at about the same rate as in Moscow. Now let us examine his wares and see what they consist of. It is mostly cotton goods that he brings, but there are also quantities of miscellaneous articles, not all of Russian manufacture by any means—soap, candles, lamps, matches, trinkets of all kinds, knives, glasses, scissors, cheap watches, scent, and goods too numerous to mention. I was informed that he makes a good living though not a fortune—say a good ten per cent. all round. You will ask how the Russian Government can afford to be so generous to their merchants, and this is easily explained. All foreign cotton imported into Russia has to pay a tax of, I think, one-half rouble per pood, and the revenue thus derived is distributed as a bounty to encourage traders. The Russian merchant also has other advantages, for he makes his bargain directly with the manufacturers, and no middlemen intervene to take their profits and put up prices.

In the midst of that inundation of Russian cotton I was very much pleased at finding a shop where only Indian goods were to be had. The dealer was a Kashmiri, but passed as a Punjabi, and I had a long talk with him. He told me that in muslin India had almost the monopoly, and white calico was in demand; his coloured handkerchiefs, although not square ones, were much softer than that "coarse Russian one" and not dearer, and when occasionally some Indian soap, knives, scissors, cigarettes, gloves, trinkets, &c., arrived, they would disappear as by magic. He insisted that if they could import

* A rouble = 25*d.*; a pood = 36 lbs.; a gold rouble = 1½ paper or silver roubles.

a stronger and more durable cottonware they could successfully compete with the Russians, but the great distance made it impossible; only the cheapest and lightest could be carried over the fearful road.

Another article I had a talk with him about was Indian tea. It appears that the administration of Kashgaria has been handed over to the mandarins of one province of China; and all the officials I met were from Hunan, and their principal remuneration appears to be the tea trade, no tea but government tea (Kwentsgha) being allowed to be sold in the bazaars. About transit the Chinese appear to have no idea, so that even Indian tea sold to Andijanis, although speculatively not interfered with, is practically forbidden, the tea not being allowed to cross the frontier. But I suppose that if the Russians had no reasons of their own to stop the Indian tea trade by the way of Kashgaria—and I think they have none for the present—the Chinese could easily be brought to reason by our agent in Kashgar if backed up by his Government, but that is another story.

KASHGARIAN PUNISHMENT

While I was in Kashgar I had several conversations with the Russian Consul-General about the tea trade. He told me that formerly the Russian custom-house at Osh used to take 30,000 roubles a year duty on Indian tea, but that now the amount had sunk to 3000 roubles. I understood from him that he would now gladly encourage the importation of Indian tea into Russian Central Asia, though he owned having formerly intrigued with the Chinese officials to stop our tea coming through Chinese into Russian territory, and had advised them to import their own. As the Chinese, however, had not taken

any steps to follow his advice, he had left them to go their own way. The Russian duty on tea, I understand, is about one shilling per pound. It is only by travelling in Central Asia, be it Russian or Chinese territory, that one realises the enormous consumption of tea: every one drinks it at all hours. Considering that the Chinese tea—which one may say is universal throughout Russian Turkestan, though here one finds it bearing a Russian mark—has come by a caravan route occupying probably six months, and that Indian tea could be delivered in Kashgar in about a month, or even in Tashkend, the capital of Russian Turkestan, in seven weeks if the Gilgit-Chitral routes were opened, it is difficult to understand why the Indian Government does not devote some attention to the development of this assured market for our Indian tea trade.

There is another article, Indian sugar, which would certainly make an invasion if only the cost of transport was not so enormous. The Russian beet sugar is sold here at the rate of a shilling a pound, and this seems to be a high price for natives to pay.

I gathered from my conversation with the Indian trader who showed me his wares that the other principal imports from India besides those I have mentioned are indigo, coral, brocade of Benares and leather goods. For indigo there is a good demand, to dye the cloth which all Chinamen wear, and this could be extended into the Russian dominions, where there is no competition. Coral has a good sale, but, as it comes from Italy, I conclude we do not benefit greatly by its sale, and our officials should try and find out if some of our own possessions cannot produce such an article. Brocade of Benares is threatened by French gold work, but goes fairly well, and there is an increasing demand for our leather goods, which are far superior to the Russian production; and as nearly all the Kashgarians wear the long Russian-shaped boot, there should be a large market open to our traders.

In return for all these goods they take back to India principally "charas," or a kind of hemp, to smoke and chew. Besides this, numdahs, or plain pieces of white felt, are taken to Srinagar and worked in colours, and thence exported to

India. These articles, together with wool and gold dust from Khotan, probably include most of the exports from Turkestan. I fancy that our merchants make something under ten per cent. all round, that is to say, when their caravans cross the Karakoram without accident, which is rare. But their goods pass through the hands of middlemen in Bombay, and it seems a pity that some plan whereby they can deal directly with the manufacturers in Manchester cannot be started.

I examined a bundle of goods which had just arrived in a caravan from Leh, and in order to do a good turn to the Indian merchant, I purchased a few articles from his stock, some scent, a few pairs of woollen socks and some enamel plates. The scent was labelled "Made in Austria," and the socks and enamel plates bore the usual mark, "Made in Germany."

My admiration for the Indian trader in Kashgaria will be understood if we have a clear understanding of the difficulties he has to overcome. He takes his goods in Bombay (I saw Lyon, Lord and Co., Manchester, on some superior shirting) with a fair credit of a year, for which he pays five per cent., though the Russians give the same credit and do not ask any interest; then he tries to get his goods to Rawulpindi, the end of the railway, and this will cost him, I suppose, four rupees per maund; from here he carries his goods in an "ekka," or country cart, to Kashmir, from Kashmir to Leh—250 miles—on ponies, but the road is good. It is here his difficulties really begin. From Leh to Yarkand is about thirty days, but over the most horrible route, perhaps, in the world. Seven high passes and numerous glaciers have to be crossed, and for eight days the road traverses a region over 16,000 and in some places 18,000 feet in height. The country is barren, for some twenty days he meets no inhabitants and no grass, and every caravan loses a certain number of ponies, which have to carry their own and their masters' food. In a caravan starting late last autumn 300 ponies and thirty drivers perished on this awful road, and the merchants always calculate a loss of thirty per cent. in animals. Such are the conditions of the Leh-Yarkand road. From Yarkand to Kashgar there are no difficulties, and this only takes five or six days.

	Cost per maund.	No. of days.
Bombay to Rawulpindi . . .	4 Rs ...	14
Pindi to Kashmir	3 Rs ...	8
Kashmir to Leh	4 Rs ...	16
Leh to Yarkand	17 Rs ...	30
Yarkand to Kashgar . . .	2 Rs ...	6
Total . . .	30 Rs per maund.	74

A pony on the road will carry two and a half maunds, so each load landed in Kashgar will cost some seventy-five rupees, and will take two months to transport from the end of the railway connection.

Now look at the trader's performance and admire his courage; who is there in the United Kingdom who gains his daily bread at the cost of such an amount of bodily exercise combined with such mental exertion to find out the interstices in the armour of the almost invulnerable Muscovite?

In comparing the inequality of the struggle I cannot help feeling inclined to set the Indian and Russian trade more or less on equal terms. What we call free trade is at the bottom the same, it means that no party should be privileged to carry the market with inferior qualities of goods, it means the triumph of industry by free competition. So, to set two rivals on equal footing is the real basis of free trade, free competition, &c. Now let us see how to level the ground a little for the weaker party.

The journey from Moscow to the end of the Russian railway, be it Samarkand or Andijan, is about equal to that from Manchester to Bombay. I should say that carriage to Peshawar on the one side and to Ferghana on the other is about the same. If we now take the caravan distance from Peshawar to Yarkand and Kashgar by the way of Chitral and Sarikol as roughly speaking a good month, which means about double the distance from the Russian railway terminus to Kashgar, the Indian merchant will still have a little disadvantage; but we must take into consideration the nature of trade in the Orient, which has its seasons and regular yearly movements; if there therefore still remains a little disadvantage in the distance of

carriage, the Oriental merchant does not consider a few days more or less as of much importance, provided he can be in at the customary season which has set the market in movement.

This Peshawar-Chitral road is, comparatively speaking, an easy one, and would be open nearly all the year round. The high road through Wakhan, south of Victoria Lake to Tashkurgan, possesses no serious difficulties, and grass is plentiful all the way. From Tashkurgan the road divides into two, one branch going to Yarkand and the other to Kashgar.

This road has also the advantage of splendid grazing for the caravan ponies, and from Wakhan it would bring the trade of Badakshan, say even of Bokhara, in closer contact with Hindustan (by way of the Upper Oxus). An old Hindu merchant told me that when a boy in India his father often told him about the advantages of trade with Kashgar and Bokhara by the way of Chitral, which at that time was much frequented by caravans. The reign of Yakub Beg and the war in Tashkend put an end to it. Such old mercantile traditions have their value in demonstrating that by all that violent action in Central Asia, trade has necessarily deviated from its natural tracks, and the plan of the Chitral route, instead of being a new one, would be only a restoration of an old well-known and well-rooted system of trade movement.

It is true that in passing from Chitral to Kashgaria our merchants would have to pass through a portion of the State of Wakhan which is under the Amir of Afghanistan, and at present the Afghan guard at Sarhad, which covers the Baroghil Pass, refuses all passage to or from Chitral to Indian traders; but surely the Government of India is not incapable of arranging this trifling matter with a friendly ally. That portion of Wakhan which our merchants would traverse, from Bozai Gumbaz to Sarhad, is only two days' march, and is quite uninhabited, with the exception of a few wandering Kirghiz. My comparison of the roads best suited to further Indian trade with Central Asia would not be complete if I did not mention a second equally good road and probably more direct than the Chitral road; I mean the road from Abbotabad passing through

Gilgit and Hunza-Nagar. This would be the winter road, as the road beyond Hunza to the crest of the Hindu Kush is impracticable in summer. I mean impracticable only at the present moment, for the distance is trifling, only seventy miles or so, and an inconsiderable outlay would suffice to render this alternative route available for trade. An alternative route is always of great value, and the distance by this road from Hindustan to Kashgar would be about the same as the Chitral road, *i.e.*, a month. There are a few small tribes in the Indus Valley who at times are inclined to give trouble, but as they do not altogether number more than a few hundred souls, they could soon be made to understand that no interference with our caravans would be tolerated.

I am sure that the transport of our Indian goods being by the opening of these roads reduced to less than half, our Indian merchant would meet the Muscovite on better terms.

But the Indian Government having to deal with some hundreds of millions of people, being over pre-occupied by very important questions, seems to forget that big questions of State are only a compound of little ones. Kashgarian trade being looked upon as of little interest in comparison with the weighty considerations of the politics of the Indian Empire, is suffering from neglect in higher quarters, and this appears to me a fault needing remedy. Little questions may have great consequences, and neglect in little, or seemingly little things, reacts most unfavourably on the whole administration, and no question of the development of trade can be unimportant to a great Empire.

The Russians are quite aware of the fact that the opening of these roads might bring rivals into the bazaars of Central Asia, which hitherto they have possessed unchallenged; indeed, from conversations I have had with them, it seemed to me that they know quite as much about the practicability of the roads I have attempted to describe as trade routes as our Indian officials know themselves, and I should venture to suggest even a little more than most.

I wonder if our Government really imagines that these roads are secret and unknown; one would suppose so from the

fact that they will not allow any ordinary Englishman to see their maps of these regions. I really must undeceive them and tell them that I have seen quite as good Russian maps of our north-west frontier as any of their so-called "confidential" maps.

It appears that the Government of India is unwilling to open these roads to our traders for strategical reasons. Let us examine these reasons and see if they are well grounded or not.

The idea of the possibility of a Russian advance on India by Chitral or Gilgit is an old story, but it undoubtedly hinders the expansion of British trade, and is also the main reason for the continued closing of these districts to travellers and sportsmen; a stupid policy, for it is extremely desirable that Englishmen should be encouraged to travel amongst and visit the inhabitants of our frontier in places where they run no danger by doing so, and in Chitral and Gilgit the natives are only too pleased to see them.

There is the fear too lest the Russians should push their frontier up to the Hindu Kush, in which case their well-known capacity for intrigue would soon make their influence felt in Chitral and Hunza-Nagar. But keeping these roads closed will not cause Russia to change her policy or to delay it.

Without wishing to pose as a strategist, I should say from some personal acquaintance with this part of the frontier that it would be an impossibility for any body of troops to force a passage to India by either of these routes, and I am confident that a body of such troops as fought in the Afridi country, well disposed and handled (cut off for a time from all interference from Simla), would place the invaders in an evil plight; but from information recently acquired during a journey on the Upper Oxus, it is evident that the Russians recognise the two routes I have commented on as presenting far greater difficulties of access to India than other roads through the Hindu Kush, respecting which the Russians are thoroughly well informed.

It may be urged that trade routes constructed through either of these valleys might divert Russian attention to them, but the

employment of a very small quantity of dynamite would render them at once impassable if occasion demanded even without the employment of troops.

If we have anything to fear from Russia it will be in the unlikely event of their army being allowed to reach the plains before being seriously opposed. I have seen such a policy advocated; and in such a case their Cossacks would tell, but they would not come by Chitral or Gilgit. I regard these Cossacks as the finest light cavalry, or rather mounted infantry, in the world; and there is practically an endless supply of them. Strong, hardy, and born horsemen, they are troops that in time of necessity can manage to do without commissariat and transport arrangements and all their attendant troubles. They live on what they can get, as best they can. What they call devotion to the Tsar is, if well examined, a fanatical feeling of fatalism. Once let 50,000 Cossacks loose on the plains of India, and we shall have trouble.

As regards the idea of a Russian advance up to the Hindu Kush. We have by the Pamir Boundary Commission of 1895 the Afghan state of Wakhan and the little Pamir covering the north of Chitral, and the Taghdumbash Pamir (presumably British territory since its inhabitants pay tribute to the Mir of Hunza) protecting the passes into Hunza. Any attempt on the part of the Russians to encroach on the boundary fixed by this Commission should, I take it, be made a *casus belli*.

Another reason alleged against the opening of the Hunza-Nagar road is that the inhabitants of the valley would be unable to provide the necessary supplies for traders, as this valley barely supplies itself. But surely with the magnificent road recently completed from India to Hunza the difficulty of supplies could be easily overcome by the establishment of a depôt at the head of the Kunjut Valley, though this would appear scarcely necessary, seeing that at Tashkurgan, which is only ten days' march from Hunza, supplies of all kinds could be arranged for; and all the country called Taghdumbash, which intervenes, is undoubtedly within our sphere since the annexation of Kunjut, although the Government hesitate to substantiate the claim.

As to the Kunjutis themselves, they, and in a similar way the Chitralis, would eagerly welcome the opening up of their countries as trade routes; for from personal experience I can say that they are not only willing but eager to earn all they can, and their complaint is that at present the policy of the Government in preventing all passage through their country renders the sight of the rupee a rarity.

If the Government will put aside the Russian ogre all difficulties will prove imaginary, and the advantages of these roads as compared with the fearful route over the Karakoram, by which our trade at present struggles to the markets of Central Asia, will become apparent.

I might add a word on the hitherto undeveloped but probably important trade which could be opened with Lhassa, to which place we have three roads from India; but I will merely say that the enterprising Muscovite already has his eyes upon the practically unknown trade of Tibet.

After the Forsyth Mission to Yarkand in 1875 we might have secured practically the whole of the marts of Chinese Turkestan, but the cold indifference of the Indian Government has lost that great opportunity, and the Russian trader is supreme; and so will he be in the country of the great Llama.

But there are other and more vital interests at stake than commercial. It is a fact not perhaps generally appreciated that Great Britain is the largest Mohammedan country in the world! The Sultan of Turkey, known throughout the East as the protector of the Faithful, the head of the faith and Mohammed's representative upon earth, rules over a population of rather less than 24,000,000, of which the great majority follow Islam. Russia, notwithstanding her sway over more than one-third of Asia, governs a total Asiatic population of merely 19,000,000, of which number less than 8,000,000 are followers of the Prophet; while England, in her Asiatic possessions, has the supervision of 290,000,000 souls, of which 58,000,000 are Mohammedans, who enjoy under her sway greater personal liberty, and are better and more justly governed, than either their Turkish or their Muscovite neighbours. This fact, which is apt to strike the novice as startling in itself, is one which

cannot in the interests of our national well-being be lost sight of.

We have by dint of long years of patient labour instilled into the Asiatic mind a belief in the unselfishness of our aims. We have impressed the tribes of the Punjab with our might, and shown them that we temper force with justice. Until our advent these people knew only one law—that of force, which they were accustomed to have used against them at every opportunity. We have, by the justice of our government, taught them that force held in reserve is in the majority of cases as efficacious as when actively employed, provided always that the will is present to employ it if requisite. So far do our Asiatic subjects realise the reason and the strength of British rule. But with every fresh example of weakness, with every indication of vacillation, these people ask what has become of the much-vaunted power of England; and as we submit to one snub after another, to-day at the hands of Russia, to-morrow at those of China, they begin to wonder whether, after all, Britain is the great power they had supposed, and waver in their loyalty to our rule. The fall of Khiva was an immense blow to the prestige of Britain in Asia, for it was well known that the Khan had made overtures to us for protection, and that we had demanded pledges as to the respecting of his territories from Russia. When, therefore, in spite of these pledges, Khiva fell, the news flew from mouth to mouth, and the estimate of England sank almost to vanishing point. The prestige thus lost was regained by the brilliant episode of the second Afghan war. When Roberts marched from Kabul to Kandahar it was said that the Lion had been aroused and would punish the wickedness of the Afghans; but here again our new-born reputation was shortlived, for by our abandonment of Kandahar we showed, according to the native interpretation, our inability to hold it. To voluntarily forego one iota of one's rights, to retire from a position once attained is, in native appreciation, a sign of weakness; and it is surely a mistake to court the contempt of those whom it is necessary to govern. Russia is wiser than ourselves, and at whatever cost she never goes back; but Russian statesmen understand the native character,

whereas, with certain exceptions, our own do not; and when perchance one of the exceptions finds himself in office, his hands are tied and his powers cramped by that iniquitous red tape which is the disgrace of our governmental system and the curse of the country.

The Treaty of Berlin served considerably to improve our reputation, for the news which spread through Asia that Britain had herself taken the Sultan—who is regarded not as the ruler of Turkey, but as the head of the Mussulman creed—in hand and remodelled his Empire, served to impress the Asiatics with a sense of our far-reaching power; and the promulgation of the Treaty of Gandamak shortly after tended to improve our status by the Afghan territory it gave us. But this did not wipe out the slur of Kandahar. Nor did subsequent events tend to rehabilitate England in Asiatic estimation. The Russian exploit at Penjdeh, the humble pie eaten by our representatives over the Afghan Boundary Commission, the failure on our part to resent the insolence of the Russians at Kushk, and the subsequent disputes on the Pamirs, have all tended to make the Mohammedans of Central Asia ask themselves if Britain really is the great power they have so long esteemed her; and it behoves us to be careful not needlessly to encourage the doubts thus raised, lest we find our prestige departed and our Empire jeopardised.

British policy in Asia has during the past ten years consisted of a continued attempt to keep on good terms with Russia. In order to attain this end no sacrifice has been thought too great, no humiliation too dear. Refusing to profit by experience, we have forgotten the breaches of faith which have embittered the past, and at each succeeding invitation met Russia with the same amount of consideration as would be meted out to any honourable power. Assurances which have been notoriously worthless have been accepted, and with an innocence worthy of a better cause our statesmen have trusted Muscovite pledges which were made without the slightest intention of being respected.

Russian "assurances" go for nothing, and should not be considered seriously. How many times in the last half-

century has the Russian Government given distinct "assurances" to our Cabinet that there was no intention of occupying Khiva, Tashkend, Khokand, Bokhara, or Merv?—and yet all these places have in turn been absorbed; in one instance even the Russian Emperor himself gave distinct orders to General Kaufman that he was not to advance further; but, in spite of the Imperial order, the very place which he was instructed to leave alone was within six months taken, and the country incorporated, because, as he said, "circumstances rendered such a step advisable."

I have noticed that these "assurances" have been given and the subsequent advance carried out notwithstanding, principally hitherto while a Liberal Administration was in office; but now it seems that no party distinction will be made. With the death of Lord Beaconsfield, whose name one finds generally respected in Russia, the wholesome awe of the power of Great Britain has vanished.

Russians I have met are generally interested in politics, and I find the idea prevalent that the present Government is one which can be easily dealt with by a little "blarney," or, if that fails, some judicious squeezing.

The time for "genteel" politics and pourparlers is past; we have for many years pursued such a policy in all parts of the world and with disastrous consequences. In Central Asia, the Niger, Madagascar, the Burmah frontier, and now the Indian frontier—everywhere it has been the same: fair words are spoken; assurances given and swallowed; and then we retire modestly, to the laughter of the whole world and with an inevitable loss of prestige. If all the other great European Powers would pursue a similar policy all would be well, but unfortunately they do not; what they want they will take if they can, and if they can get their wishes granted without resistance so much the better.

Our efforts, therefore, should be directed to secure for ourselves what really will be of use to us before it is too late; and no occasion may occur better than the present.

It is curious to see how the position in Peking is exactly reflected in Chinese Turkestan. Here, as there, Russian

influence is at its height, British influence is *nil;* Russian trade has increased some millions of roubles during the past year, British trade has fallen correspondingly in proportion to its volume. The causes which have brought about this position are not difficult to fathom.

In regard to the future of Sarikol there is not much room for speculation. The country is of importance, since, apart from its possessing pasture land of considerable extent, the power occupying it commands all the passes leading to Kashmir and Chitral. At present Sarikol with the neighbouring native state of Wakhan serves as a buffer between the British Indian outposts and the Russian frontier with an average width of some twenty miles or so, and the establishment of Russian posts here and on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush would have a most disastrous effect on the minds of the fanatical and by no means always reliable tribesmen. I heard a good deal of this Sarikol Question while I was in the Province. The Russian Consul at Kashgar discussed the question with me quite openly. He said that the British Government would not consider it worth while to protest, and added that in a short time the whole of Chinese Turkestan would be absorbed by Russia. The Chinese have, it is true, forts and garrisons in the province, their largest force, consisting of about three thousand troops, being at Kashgar, but probably they would all run away at the slightest indication of trouble. The Russian Consul told me that he had agreed with the Russian Commander at Marghilan that one battalion of infantry, five hundred Cossacks, and a battery could at any time occupy and subjugate this enormous Chinese province.

Whatever may be their intentions regarding Chinese territory, it ought to be made plain that a great portion of this province of Sarikol pays tribute to a British vassal—the Mir of Hunza—and has done so for generations. I discussed the matter with the Mir himself. He knew of the Russian's ideas, and said that the whole of his people would oppose any such act of aggression. He added that he expected to receive support from the British in view of such an eventuality arising. Whatever may be the views of the Imperial Government at

St. Petersburg, no traveller in these regions can ignore the fact that the Russian officials in Central Asia would eagerly welcome orders for an advance. I do not want to imply that they are unfriendly to individual British subjects on the rare occasions when they see them. On the contrary, they are polite, but, inasmuch as all prospects for their own future are bound up with active service, it is not remarkable that they openly discuss the probabilities and possibilities of an opportunity for an advance. They cite the death of Abdurrahman as this opportunity. In view of possible difficulties in these parts, it is urgently necessary that some steps be taken to provide a practical road between the British advanced post at Hunza and Sarikol, a distance of about a hundred miles. At present, while the Russians have an easy road right up to the British frontier, we have nothing but a goat track.

The only doubt that occurs to one's mind is whether the Mir of Hunza is correct in his expectations respecting British support. Would the Government take a stand against the annexation of Sarikol, or would they repeat their well-known tactics of uttering mild protests, entering on a prolonged diplomatic correspondence with St. Petersburg, and allowing the subject to drop ?

Looking at the situation in all its bearings, there is but little prospect of Russia's meeting with a serious check in her forward movement. Nor is one tempted to join in the oft-raised cry of alarm at the bare suggestion of the empires of Russia and of Britain adjoining. There is no more danger of war in the approximation of the two countries in Asia than has been shown to exist in the neighbourhood of Russia and Germany in Europe, where the natural line of demarcation is far less well defined than that afforded by the Hindu Kush and its continuation. The danger to this country in the onward march of Russia lies in the comments which will arise in the minds of the people of India, who, in the final triumph of the Muscovite, will see a further evidence of the impotence of Great Britain, and who on this account will be the more prone to listen to the temptations of the skilled mischief-maker. To permit Russia to annex Northern Afghanistan, after having

twice entered on costly wars on the mere suspicion that she was obtaining undue influence in that country, would be to heap coals of fire upon our abashed heads; but can it be seriously believed that we could push an army in Afghan Turkestan in time to prevent the occupation of that country by a Russian army from across the Oxus? With men pouring into Afghanistan from Kala Khum, from Hissar, from Sherisabz, Kilif, Kerki, Merv, Khushk, and Sarakhs, provided with a friendly country well arranged for the movements of large bodies of men, is it likely that we could stay the advance with our own forces 300 miles away behind two ranges of all but impassable mountains and a difficult country between? Russia could occupy Herat within twenty-four hours of deciding on the desirability of such a course. It would be hopeless to attempt to stop her. If England desires to prevent Russia's occupation of Herat, of Maimana, Andkhui, Balkh and Kunduz, then let her occupy them herself while she yet may. To wait for Russia to make the first move is to lose the option, and to find our sphere of influence closed by the buttresses of the Hindu Kush.

There are, I am aware, those who have faith in the protestations of Russia. They are the same as those who recently banded together to welcome the astounding peace rescript of the Tsar, a document which has been well compared by Alexis Krausse to "a plea uttered by an expert and oft-convicted burglar for the reduction of the police force on account of its cost." I do not feel called upon to discuss the tenets of such faddists, as sentimentality is altogether outside the study of history, and in the whole history of the relations between Russia and foreign States she has never adhered to a pledge previously given a single instant after it has appeared to her advantage to break it. In one respect, and in one only, does the Russian resemble the Chinese. The only power which will keep him to his bargain is force, a liberal display of which is, as a rule, sufficient to keep him to reason. Persuading, appealing to his sense of honour, and reference to treaties, pledges and understandings are alike useless. And having set her heart upon the Hindu Kush as the next boundary of her Asiatic dominions in her march to the South, Russia will attain her

desire irrespective of cost and by any means which will serve to secure her end.

Objection has been taken to the various schemes with which Russia has been credited for the conquest of the territory bordering the Indian frontier, on the score of the difficulties of communication, and Colonel Malleson and other experts have written volumes proving the impossibility of Russia overcoming the difficulties of transport across a mountainous district of Afghanistan. But I think that on careful examination it will be found that these difficulties do not need consideration, for the reason that they do not come into the question. In her wildest dreams of aggression Russia has never for one moment contemplated a descent in force on the Indian frontier. Thorough in all her methods, she has worked out the problem in an altogether different way. When rumours of an intended incursion into Afghanistan were mooted at the time o the Franco-Prussian war, Russia's nearest *point d'appui* was at Orenburg, 800 miles from Kabul, and the pessimistic politicians of that day replied to the alarm which was expressed by pointing out the immense distance which supervened between the Russian base and the point of attack, and enlarged on the immense difficulties imposed by the necessity of crossing the wide-spreading deserts and barren steppes which intervened. As the Russians moved across the plains of Turkestan and took in turn Khiva, Khokand, Samarkand, Tashkend and Merv, the fear of an invasion of British territory was disposed of by the oft-repeated pledges made by Russian statesmen—pledges which are to this day periodically offered up on the altar of Muscovite diplomacy, and which the majority of the English people have not yet learned to appreciate at their proper value. Through all these years the aim of Russia has remained unchanged, and to-day she works as steadily towards the attainment of this aim as she has done at any time within the past thirty years. Mile by mile and inch by inch has Russia pushed across the desert sands of Transcaspia and the Sir Daria, until to-day she threatens the frontier of Afghanistan, not at a given point, but along a continuous and conterminous frontier of close on

500 miles, along the entire length of which she is in a position to concentrate her forces so as to be able to cross the boundary at the psychological moment, and take possession of the old Khanates of Balkh, Kunduz, and Wakhan without giving a moment's warning. Herat has long lain at her mercy, and of late years, not content with these openings for her future prowess, she has been diligently preparing backdoors in the Pamirs and in Seistan through which she can make a flank attack on the outposts of British India, and thus occupy the attention of the Indian Government while she is possessing herself of its neighbour's lands. By dint of thus creeping up and absorbing every acre as she goes, Russia will at no great interval find herself in juxtaposition with the much-vaunted scientific frontier of England, and then shall we learn the truth about the threatened dangers which an approximation of the Russian frontier with the British has been held to imply.

The point which concerns the readers of this book in regard to a Russian descent on Afghan Turkestan, is rather how such a course will affect the Russian Empire than what influence it may have upon Great Britain, and the only possible reply which occurs to me is that it will before many years are over tend to bring disaster to the Russian throne. I hold, as I believe all those who know the country and the people hold, that the present state of Russia is destined to exist only so long as the governing classes succeed in exerting their sway by the repression of individuality and the withholding of education from the masses. The downfall of Russia will be encompassed, not by a rising of the native races nor by a war with a rival Power, the upheaval will come when the Slavs themselves begin to learn that they are human beings, not brutes, and that the degraded ignorance in which they live is part of the programme evolved by the ruling class for the rendering of their own position secure. Some day it will dawn upon the moujik that it is he who creates the wealth which the Tchinovik enjoys without sharing in the proceeds of his toil; some day it will strike the trader that the conditions of his existence are harder and his share in the burdens of State greater than in the case of his equals in other lands; and so it will come to

pass that the condition of military service, more especially among the Cossacks, will be discounted by comparison with the armies of other nations. Russia is wise to do her utmost to delay the march of education within her borders, for so surely as the intelligence of her children becomes developed, so surely will the most tyrannical system in modern history be shivered to its utmost foundations.

For the moment there is little to fear. The strides made by education throughout Russia during recent years is practically *nil*. The number of persons who can read throughout the Russian Empire is under 3 per cent. of the population, and the existing school accommodation provides for less than 2,000,000 pupils out of a total of 129,000,000. Towards improving the condition of her people Russia takes no steps. To quote Mr. Krausse:

> The national debt has increased by 34,000,000 roubles within the last ten years. The whole of this money has been expended on strategic railways and military preparations, and yet there has been no war to cause a drain on her resources, nothing is done to develop that which she possesses, and outside St. Petersburg, Russia remains ignorant and benighted, barbaric, uncivilised, sickly and half-starved. Education is throughout the land practically unknown, except to the upper class. The peasants, who should represent the strength of the country, are so unskilled in the ordinary methods of cultivation as to be subject to frequent famine, the result of their agricultural ignorance. From the moment when, with a loud flourish of trumpets, Alexander II. decreed the emancipation of the serfs, nothing has been done to train, educate, or to raise this miserable people from their degradation, and while hundreds of millions have been spent in the indulgence, in the craze, for militarism and conquest, the moujiks have been retrograded rather than assisted in emerging from their condition of animal existence.*

It is of course unbelievable that this condition of things is the result of chance; nor can the circumstances of the people be satisfactorily accounted for by the indolence of the governing class. In her negotiations of the most difficult questions of the day, as in her legislation for the welfare of the State (the governing class being representative of the State itself), the Russian has shown himself a past master in far-

* "Russia in Asia," p. 286.

sightedness, and were other evidence wanted, there can be no question that the condition of the masses is what the Government desires it to be. Returning to the consideration of the previous question, we cannot but be struck by an important factor in connection with the further advance of the Russian frontier. I refer to the fact that the nearer the subjects under Russian rule are brought to those who are placed under more tolerant and more benignant conditions of existence, the sooner are they likely to realise their own degradation, and take the first steps in the movement which will one day bring about the downfall of Tsardom, and I am surprised that I have not come across any mention of this danger in recent Russian political writings which, as a general rule, are as farsighted as they are outspoken.

It would be foreign to the subject-matter of this volume were I to enlarge on the direct results of the coming annexation of innermost Asia. The outcome would be outspread, and include many items besides the annexation of Kashgaria and Afghan Turkestan. The usurpation of Tibet will follow the transfer of Khotan, and the Russian dominion over Northern Persia will be merged in actual possession. Did my space allow I could show how the acquisition of what remains foreign on the Caspian seaboard will be followed by a struggle for the Persian Gulf, but this takes us to regions outside the sphere of the present book, and I must proceed with my conclusions.

The Russification of Afghanistan will directly affect this country less than will the Russification of Kashgaria. The amount of British trade which passes through Balkh and Herat is exceedingly small, and the surrounding country so poor as to restrict its capacity as a customer for our goods to the smallest proportions. The trade of Central Asia has been lost to us since the Russians crossed the Jaxartes, and were the demand greater or communications easier the barriers created by the Russian custom-house would effectually prevent our traders working at a profit. In Chinese Turkestan, on the other hand, there has always been a well-defined opening for our trade which, but for the eccentricities of our Governmental

system, would have long ago developed into large proportions. The circumstances connected with this question have been already fully discussed.

The most striking anomaly in connection with this complicated subject is to be found in the financial aspects of the case. Russia, long since on the verge of bankruptcy, with a depreciated currency and a damaged credit, has for years past annually expended with one hand hundreds of millions of roubles on schemes which for many years at least must remain unremunerative, while with the other she has seized new territories, undeveloped and deficient in resources, which can only serve to further impoverish her coffers. The first question which the business man is impelled to ask in this connection is, What possible object can Russia have in this eccentric procedure? Unless some sudden change be made, or some unheard-of wealth revert from her unexploited regions, a financial crisis in her career must be close at hand, and when the crash comes it will be one which in the case of any individual would be met with allegations of fraud. That Russia is an unthinking spendthrift is about the last accusation that one conversant with the characteristics of the race could bring. But the facts are difficult to explain and the position difficult to understand. The whole of the provinces of Central Asia, excepting those portions of the Zarafshan valley, is run at a loss. The greater part of Transcaspia is an unproductive desert, and neither the plateau of the Ust Urt or the sandy wastes of the Kara Kum are capable of development in any direction. The Pamirs, the latest acquisition to the Tsar's domain, with an average altitude of some 13,000 feet, are closed to traffic during a great portion of the year, and the only settled population they boast, besides a few Tajiks along their western border, are the Russian officers and their attendant Cossacks, who are posted mid the snows to bide their time until they are ordered to advance into the valleys beyond. The annexation of this region has added further to the annual deficit in which Russia finds herself involved—a deficit which is not likely to be decreased by the seizure of the bordering territories, in which the valleys suffice barely to produce sufficient for the

needs of their fanatical and warlike inhabitants. There can be no question but that the Pathans along the upper Oxus can only be brought under Russian sway by methods similar to those employed against the Tekkes. Fair fighting will never subdue them, and it is only by the slaughter of the whole of their fighting men and the extermination of sufficient numbers of their women and children to strike terror into the soul of the race that the people could be made to settle down under the dominion of a conqueror. That Russia is capable of these methods we know full well, but after they have proved successful she would only find herself in possession of another strip of undesirable country which would bring her nothing but extended area, increased expenditure, and an addition to her reputation for brutal savagery.

Are we, then, to conclude that Russia means to try conclusions on the Indian frontier? If so, she will have reached the limit of her adventures, for I am not one of those who believe in the decline of British power, nor do I think that an army of untutored Cossacks could hold their own against the British and the native forces we could bring to bear against them. It would take a bolder man than I to forecast the outcome of Russia's next departure, nor does it come within my sphere to discount it, but so surely as her onward strides have been aided by the vacillation of British Governments, who have been unable to cope with her ability and her lack of scruple, so surely shall we find that Russia will be hoist on her own petard, and after being rent to her foundations, will serve in succeeding ages as a lesson to future nations of the futility of ability without scruple, persistency without pity, and dominion without religion.

A KASHGARIAN FAKIR

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF LANDMARKS RELATING TO EVENTS IN INNERMOST ASIA.

1758 Chinese took possession of Kashgaria.
1838 John Wood visited Iskashim and discovered Victoria Lake.
1864 Yakub Beg raised rebellion in Kashgaria.
1865 Russians conquered Khokand.
1873 Sir T. D. Forsyth's mission to Yarkand and treaty with Yakub.
1875 Khokand annexed to Russia under name of Ferghana.
1876 Skobeleff, with Kostenko and Prince Witgenstein, explore Pamirs.
1877 Severtsoff's expedition to Pamirs.
1879 Chinese recapture Kashgaria.
1881 Abdurrahman conquers Badakshan.
1883 Putiata and Benderski's expedition to Pamirs.
1885 Ney Elias goes on special mission to Chinese Turkestan.
1885–7 Bonvalot travels through Pamirs N. to S.
1887 Russians occupy Kerki; final settlement of Afghan frontier.
1888 Central Asiatic Railway opened to Samarkand.
1888–9 Lieut. George Littledale explores Pamirs with Mrs. Littledale.
1888–9 Colonel Grombchevski's expedition.
1889 Captain F. E. Younghusband visits Pamirs.
1889 Major Cumberland visits Pamirs.
1889 Colonel Grombchevski's expedition stopped.
1891 Captain Yonoff establishes Fort Murghabi.
1892 Lord Dunmore visits Pamirs.
1892 Captain Yonoff explores Pamirs, is opposed by Afghans, and kills sixteen men at Somatash.
1892 Russia apologises and evacuates Pamirs.
1893 Russian expedition demarcates Russo-Chinese frontier.
1894 Chinese Envoy concludes agreement with Russia.

1894 Skirmish between Cossacks and Afghans at Yaims.
1894 Lord Curzon visits Pamirs.
1894–5 Sven Hedin explores Pamirs.
1895 Anglo-Russian agreement as to spheres of influence.
1895 Major-General Gerard surveys Pamir frontier.
1896 Fort Charog established.
1896 Fort constructed at Langar Kisht.
1897 Road from Marghilan to Murghabi completed.

APPENDIX B

THE COMMERCE OF INNERMOST ASIA

COMMERCE in innermost Asia is still in its incipient stage, and it is scarcely likely that the resources of the country will be developed to such an extent as to enable it to enter into competition with the markets of the world for many years to come. Apart from the mineral wealth of the province of Semirechensk and the Altai, which is reported to be considerable, but which little has so far been done to develop, the natural produce of the region is poor in quality and limited in extent. The staple products may be said to consist of sheep and cattle, and, owing to the unwillingness of the natives to engage in manual labour, there is little to buy beyond raw produce. Thus, notwithstanding the hundreds of thousands of sheep to be found in the Pamir valleys and their surroundings, no attempt has been made to deal with the wool or to dress the skins upon the spot, and the lack of enterprise among the merchants and the trading class does not tend to remedy the condition of affairs. There are quite a number of causes which tend to restrict the commercial development of the country. Lack of communications, badness or entire absence of roads, vexatious imposts along the Russian, Chinese and Afghan frontiers, absence of a practicable monetary system and difficulty in forwarding remittances, all help to handicap the trader and limit the opportunities for the creation of wealth, and the listless indolence of the native, coupled with the paucity of his needs and his lack of ambition, make the situation the more unsatisfactory from the exploiter's standpoint.

Strictly speaking, there are no factories in innermost Asia. Even in the city of Vierny, with its teeming population and its vaunted Western ideas, the creative commercial activity is represented by a few establishments in which certain processes are carried out with the purposes of supplying local requirements, but the attempts which have been hitherto made in the establishment of flour mills, tanneries, &c., have

been no more successful than those which have been made towards the cultivation of tobacco, which can only be characterised as being a failure. It would be scarcely too much to say that the industries of the city of Vierny are to-day in the same condition as when the city was founded in 1854. This unsatisfactory state of things is excused by the natives on the score of the remoteness of market-centres and the costliness of transports, and it is generally admitted that no revival of commerce is to be expected until the city is brought into communication with Turkestan on one side and with Siberia on the other. The question of the desired connection with the existing Central Asiatic Railway has long been discussed, and MM. Paroshin and Baum have both written exhaustive papers dealing with the subject, and pointing out that Vierny is destined to remain in its present condition of commercial helplessness until it is connected with the rest of Asia by the iron road. As the city is 300 miles from the present terminus of the Central Asiatic Railway at Andijan and nearly three times as far from the Siberian line at Omsk, and as, moreover, the country is in either direction extremely mountainous and full of engineering difficulties, it is hardly likely that the desired communication will be supplied for some time to come; nor, when one glances at the commercial condition of such cities as Khokand and Andijan, which are connected by railway with all the important towns of Turkestan, one is tempted to question the correctness of the forecasts made as to the effect of the railway when constructed.

Since Russia has established herself in Central Asia only one new industry of any extent or importance has been developed in that region. I refer to the cotton-raising industry, which has during recent years assumed very large proportions throughout the fertile valleys of Bokhara, and the culture of the plant has extended along the entire Zarafshan basin, and is now attracting attention in that of the Jaxartes. The crops are packed and sent by rail to the Caspian, whence they are conveyed to European Russia to be converted into prints and piece goods in the factories of Poland and Moscow. With this solitary exception, and perhaps the addition, of the evaporation of a certain quantity of salt, no single industry has been developed by Russian energy.

The absence of factories in innermost Asia is the more remarkable from the fact that it would be perfectly possible for the country to manufacture the bulk of the articles it now imports from European Russia, besides supplying a demand which is already well developed for Western manufactures in the Chinese provinces of Kashgar, Yarkand,

and Kulja. Material is abundant, labour is cheap, though poor in quality. Power could be obtained from the strong currents of the rivers which trend in every direction. The cost of provisions is so slight in the lowlands as to place the necessaries of life within the reach of all, and there is sufficient to supply the needs of any number of emigrants who might be attracted to innermost Asia by the employment afforded in connection with numerous factories. Under existing circumstances the produce of the country is handicapped by the local conditions. The price of corn is exceedingly low, and the population being small, the harvest frequently fails to produce its expenses, and thus it happens that after a good year the amount of land cultivated diminishes, with the result that prices rise. And thus the profits of the farmer ebb and flow, many renouncing agriculture completely ruined, while others turn their attention to the caravan trade, which offers more favourable opportunities for gaining a living, though at the cost of far greater labour.

Among the few instances of commercial energy to be found in innermost Asia are two flour mills in the neighbourhood of Vierny. The mills are of the most approved kind, and were erected three years ago by M. Gavriloff, a wealthy merchant, who expected to derive large profits from his venture. Experience has, however, shown that the new departure thus made was premature, inasmuch as the majority of the inhabitants of the district either grow their own corn or buy it in harvest time when the price is low, with the result that the local sale of flour is restricted to the requirements of a few confectionery houses. On the other hand, the cost of transport is so great as to render it impossible to send stocks of flour to other towns and realise a profit, the expense of carriage from Vierny to Tashkend being as much as a rouble a pud of forty pounds. The production of these mills is, therefore, restricted, and the tens of thousands of roubles which they cost their proprietors produce no interest.

The lack of ready market for the corn produced in the fertile region of Semirechensk suggested the idea of utilising it for the purpose of distilling, and two distilleries supply the local demand for corn spirit; owing, however, to the amount of distillation which is carried on in Bokhara the demand in the surrounding district is fully supplied, and for this reason and the lack of market the spirit has to be sold at a price which is barely remunerative. It is the same with wine, which is made in immense quantities throughout Turkestan, but which, owing to lack of facilities, cannot be sent into the surrounding

country. According to the last official return issued, there are five distilleries in the Samarkand district, which distil 2,500,000 vedroes of proof spirits annually, the normal consumption of grapes being 265,000 puds. I was unfortunately unable to obtain reliable statistics respecting the quantity of spirits produced in the province of Ferghana, in Semirechensk. Supposing, however, that the output in these two provinces is equal to that of Samarkand, it must follow that they tend to add still further to the over-production and reduce the price. A noteworthy factor in the question of the wine trade of Central Asia is to be found in the quality, which is poor, and there can be little doubt but that greater care taken in the culture of the grape and in the process of manufacture would, by tending to improve the quality of the wine, enable it to compete with those beverages which Russia imports in such large quantities, and for which she pays so many million roubles to foreign countries every year. At present the excise duty received on corn spirits is higher than that paid on the juice of the grape by 150,000 roubles.

As an instance of the difficulty in which the farmers not infrequently find themselves, I may instance the fact that in the winter of 1895 corn was sold in Semirechensk at sixty-five kopeks the chetwert of eight puds, equal to 320 lbs., 5½*d.* a hundredweight, while during the same year wheat was obtainable in the Taranchi settlement of Alekseyedka for nine kopeks a pud, equal to 6*d.* a hundredweight. In the following year oats for the army were supplied to the commissariat department at Vierny for sixty kopeks a chetwert. Such prices are, of course, below the cost of production, and tend to discourage the farmer and cause him to give up agriculture altogether, a result which is likely in the end to prove disastrous to the country, for which reason it is extremely desirable that the question of transport, which is mainly responsible, should be taken up forthwith, and the railway pushed on without delay.

One of the greatest anomalies in the commercial aspect of innermost Asia is to be found in connection with the tanning industry, which one would expect to find flourishing exceedingly throughout the region. The enormous number of hides and skins produced in the steppe lands and the lower valleys should afford a plentiful supply of leather goods for local consumption, but this is not the case. The attempts to manufacture leather on the spot are of the crudest, and the results of those tanneries which exist at Vierny unsatisfactory. The bulk of the skins, which are not roughly cured by the Kirghiz for their

own covering, are exported right across Central Asia, and a proportion of these find their way back in the form of boots, shoes, &c. &c., and have to be sold at a high price in order to cover the two freights they have paid.

Experiments which have been made in tobacco culture serve to show that this industry might be largely developed on the steppes. Last year an area of twenty desyatins were in cultivation, with the result that eighty puds of excellent leaf were obtained from each desyatin; and there can be little question but that, were a regular and rapid mode of transport available, a good trade could be done by sending the leaf to the Russian and Siberian factories.

Among the industries of innermost Asia which show some promise is that of oil-crushing, which is carried on in several mills worked by water power. The seeds treated consist of sunflower, hemp, flax and poppy, the first being the most usual. Considerable quantities of oil are thus prepared, the annual output averaging 8000 puds, and the prices realised range from 2 R. 80 K. to 3 R. 40 K. the pud. About half the oil produced is sent to Tashkend, where it realises seven roubles and thus affords an exception to the bulk of the products from Semirechensk by showing a reasonable profit after defraying the cost of manufacture and carriage. The oil industry appears to be rapidly swelling, and in the district already referred to there are thirty oil mills of native construction at work, the power being supplied in each case by a single horse. About a quarter of the land possessed by the villagers is put out to mustard, and the oil obtained from the seed serves the people for food and lighting purposes, while the surplus is sold in Vierny for about two roubles the pud. In other parts of the same district oil-cake is made, but the methods employed by the natives are exceedingly unsatisfactory, while those followed by the Russians are little better, and the construction of the mills is so faulty as to leave half the oil in the husks of the seed. Notwithstanding the indifference of the methods at present followed, and the slowness with which the industry is being developed, there can be no question that the oil-producing trade of innermost Asia has a great future before it. During the last year or so experiments have been taken in hand by experts, with a view of testing the capacity of the country. The merchants Gavriloff and Ivanoff have sown castor oil seeds with satisfactory results, and as this product is largely used in manufacturing processes, especially in dyeing and cotton printing, as well as being a valuable factor in soap making, the culture of this plant is pretty certain to be

extended so soon as means of communication between the manufacturing centres are available. There are at present several oil mills in European Russia where castor oil is pressed from seeds which are purchased from England, but there is little doubt that immediately the province of Semirechensk is joined by rail with the rest of Russia the British trade in this commodity will cease.

Until a few years ago a considerable trade in wooden goods was done between Semirechensk and Siberia, and large quantities of cart-shafts, axle-trees, troughs and waggons were manufactured; but this has declined to such an extent as to have practically come to an end owing to the difficulty of finding the necessary timber, which was caused in a rather curious way. After the great earthquake of 1887, which destroyed nearly all the brick-built houses in the Vierny steppes, an order was promulgated permitting the cutting of the trees in the neighbouring forests for building purposes, and thus the people were enabled to replace the buildings which had been destroyed by wooden houses, which were speedily erected. This permission was generally made use of, with result that the forests were rapidly thinned, until in 1889 the Government, fearing the total devastation of the forests, cancelled the previous order. The restriction on the cutting of trees has brought the supply of wood to an end, and for the present this industry, formerly so considerable, has declined almost to vanishing-point.

The most prolific natural product of the plains of innermost Asia is the fruit which everywhere abounds. No habitation of man in the steppe-land or in the irrigation districts of Chinese Turkestan is without its attendant orchard, and the trees once planted appear to flourish persistently in spite of both extremes of temperature and the most casual attention at the hands of their owners.

The exact area of land under fruit cultivation is not officially known, but it is stated that there are enough orchards in the territory lying between lakes Balkash and Issik-Kul to supply fruit sufficient for the demands of the whole of Siberia, as well as to provide for all local requirements. In consequence of the cheapness of trees the planting of an orchard is a very inexpensive matter, and grafted trees of the best kinds can be bought ready for planting at from three to seven roubles a hundred. Throughout the late summer and autumn the markets overflow with choice fruit which cannot find purchasers. Every house has its orchard, and the inhabitants rarely buy fruit, for which the only customers are the nomads who visit the towns to obtain stores and the soldiers, and most fruit is not sold by number or by weight, but by the

sack of from four to five puds. There is an unlimited demand for fruit, especially apples, in Siberia, and a considerable quantity finds its way thither; but the cost of the lengthy transport is so great as to handicap the trade considerably, and notwithstanding the quality and the quantity of the produce of Semirechensk, the fruit trade is not what it should be. The first visit to the markets of this region paid by a newcomer is apt to prove a revelation. Apples weighing from two to two and a half pounds are plentiful, and a dessert fruit originally imported from France, and possessing an extremely delicate flavour, is largely grown on account of its keeping qualities, which enables it to stand the journey of a month or more to Siberia without suffering in any way.

Owing to the favourable conditions of the climate and soil, the vegetable produce is abundant as the fruit. On account, however, of the difficulties of transport and ease with which it is damaged, the exportation of vegetable produce is difficult, and the prices obtained in the home markets extremely low. The price realised by 100 heads of cabbage is about a rouble; 100 cucumbers can generally be bought from 5 to 6 kopeks; water melons realise from 40 to 50 kopeks a cartload, &c. Under more favourable conditions it would, of course, be possible to supply Western Siberia with vegetables in abundance where, in consequence of climatic conditions, they are only grown in restricted quantities. Experiments which have been made at intervals since 1889 in the culture of the sugar beet show that the soil is well suited to this purpose, and a very large industry is expected to be one day developed, which it is hoped will supply not only the whole of the sugar required for the Siberian market, but also that consumed in Western China.

The only other product which calls for mention is rice, of which close on 30,000 puds are annually grown in the Vierny district. This realises from 40 to 50 kopeks a pud, and a good deal of it is exported to Semipalatinsk, where it is bought by the traders, who convey it to Siberia, where it realises from three to four roubles the pud.

It will thus be seen that the future of the commerce of innermost Asia is entirely dependent on the question of communications, and that as soon as the railway is carried on so as to unite the steps of Semirechensk with the markets of Tashkend and those of Siberia, so soon will the prosperity of innermost Asia increase, while the conditions of life will become more in accord with those of Western nations.

APPENDIX C

THE MINERAL WEALTH OF INNERMOST ASIA

FROM the earliest times Central Asia has been referred to by its surrounding peoples as the "Golden Bottom," though on what grounds this name was originally conferred is not very clear, inasmuch as it was not until recent years that any attempt was made to inquire into the mineral wealth of the country. The first expert to take the matter in hand was Professor Mushketoff, who in 1874, 1875 and 1877 conducted a series of geological researches in the mountainous districts of the country, and reported that the deposits are in some places pretty considerable, and that layers of silver, lead, and iron ores and rock salt are to be met with in the valley of the Kashgaria, while coal exists in extensive deposits in the valley of the Ili. Other evidences, in addition to those adduced by Professor Mushketoff, tend to show that there is in Central Asia, but more especially in Semirechia, very considerable mineral wealth, the exploitation of which would materially benefit the economic condition of the country. But while the existence of this mineral wealth is quite beyond question, nothing has been done to develop it, nor is it likely that under existing conditions it will be developed. The solution of this anomaly is to be found in the lack of communications between the out-of-the-way regions of innermost Asia and European Russia, it being a matter of utter impossibility to transport minerals across the steppes to the mountain passes of Ferghana by caravan. The question of communications is all-important in this connection, and it is only necessary to turn to the corn trade of innermost Asia to find an example of how the interests of commerce are governed by the means of transport. It is well known that the province of Semirechensk is a corn-producing country on a prolific scale, and capable of yielding fourfold the amount of corn requisite for home consumption. It is, on the other hand, a fact that the neighbouring provinces of Sir-Daria and Ferghana are always in need of corn, but

these districts find it cheaper to draw their supply of grain from Southern Russia, a distance twice as great, than from Semirechensk, where corn is grown more cheaply than in any other part of Russian dominions. And, moreover, thanks to the existence of the line of railway, the supply of corn from Southern Russia can always be relied on in Tashkend, Khojend and Khokand, while the supplies from Semirechensk, which have to be brought on the backs of camels or ponies, is very uncertain and apt to be interfered with by climatic conditions, in addition to which the cost of transport is so great as to bring the price of the grain when delivered above that at which the produce of Southern Russia could be sold.

The construction of mills for the working and development of the mineral wealth of the country is, under existing circumstances, not to be entertained, as the miners and mill-owners would have to depend exclusively on the local demand and on the requirements of the neighbouring Chinese provinces for the disposal of their produce. The consumption in the immediate neighbourhood would, in consequence of the smallness of the population and the large proportion of nomads who lead a primitive existence, be very small and utterly insufficient for the maintenance of mining works, and for this reason a development of the mineral resources of innermost Asia is not likely to occur for a considerable time; but once let the country be opened up by a railway in communication with the rest of Central Asia and the situation would be entirely changed, while the railway itself would doubtless become one of the principal customers of the collieries, which its advent would call into existence. Failing the working of the coal which is known to exist in extensive deposits within a reasonable distance from the surface, the natives of innermost Asia burn wood, reeds, and camel's dung, and this notwithstanding the fact that dense seams of excellent coal are known to lie within two or three versts of the main road in the neighbourhood of Pishpek, and that the mineral is to be met with exposed on the surface of the earth in the vicinity of the Baum defile, where the Kirghiz habitually use it for fuel. The neighbourhood of the river Ili is known to be rich in coal deposits, and the district between the town of Sindun and the river Djergalan, a distance of forty versts, has been shown to consist of one extensive coalfield, and is calculated to contain a supply sufficient to yield 20,000,000 puds annually for 300 years. This Ili coal-basin seems likely one day to become one of the greatest sources of fuel supply in the world, and covers an area of some 1200 square versts. Primitive methods of mining have been practised in this

district for many years past, and it is estimated that 350,000 puds of coal are annually obtained and sold at from 4 to 8 kopeks a pud. On the introduction of proper machinery for the working of the coal this price would, of course, be considerably reduced. On the river Kash, 80 versts east of the Ili basin, there is another coal-producing district, covering an area of upwards of 50 square versts, and other coalfields exist on the southern declivity of the Kara-Tag mountains, and in the basin of the Tékes river, while further deposits are known to exist along the basin of the Charin near its outlet from the Aiguir mountains. In contradistinction to these facts, it is to be noted that such coal as is to be found in Turkestan is of a very inferior quality, and there is no doubt but that the province of Semirechensk will in the future serve to supply the bulk of the coal required for consumption throughout Central Asia.

Coal on the river Markhur contains 52.7 % carbon and 5.6 % volatile combustible matter; in the vicinity of Chuguchak 55.5 % carbon and 29.5 % combustible matter; Tarbagatai coal, from various investigations, from 47.4–60.2 % carbon; and the coal in the Ili basin from 57.6–61 % carbon, and from 24.6–28.2 % combustible matter. The best samples of Turkestan coal contain 64–68 % carbon, and in one case—namely, in Katuir-Bulak, province Ferghana—the percentage of carbon reached 81.7, but there is also that kind of coal which does not contain more than 32, 35, and 38 % of carbon. The figures obtained in respect of the heating qualities of the coal from the province of Semirechensk are, on average, 3790–5500 units; but the coal from the Ili basin has not yet been tested as regards its heating qualities. The best Ferghana coal reveals an aptitude of 7026 units, but this is an exception, for there are samples giving no more than 3665, 3400, and even 2640 units of heat. In any case, coal is of the greatest importance to the province of Semirechensk, being one of the chief factors of its development and economic prosperity; while for the projected railway, which will connect in time the province with Turkestan on the one side and with Siberia and Russia on the other, it will be of the utmost value. Thus a railway across the province, commencing at Pishpek, near the western boundary of the Sir-Daria province, to Sergiopol on the northern, would be sure of a cheap and plentiful supply of fuel for centuries to come, the over-abundance of which could be conveyed quickly and cheaply to all places requiring cheap fuel. Thus, the economic conditions of the country would be changed, and, at the same time, considerable profit would accrue from the undertaking.

There is no doubt that, as soon as a railway is constructed, the working and exploitation of the coal deposits will commence; manufactories and mills for the working of other minerals of the country will be constructed, the products of which will have easy access to foreign markets. We here enumerate, in their order of importance, the various minerals of the province, which can serve as articles of trade and commerce.

Iron.—In the province of Semirechensk the following localities are known to contain iron ore: (1) In the Kuizuil-Kum mountains, 25 versts south from the Aina Bulak station—that is, in close proximity to the road leading from Djarkent to Altuin-Emel. Professor Mushketoff states that this locality contains the richest iron ores in Turkestan. Here the ores form a lode 3 sajens (21 Russian feet) thick. This lode apparently extends over one verst in length, but there is no foundation for supposing that it does not extend much further. Its depth has not been ascertained, but there is good reason for believing that it is very considerable. From its issues on the surface alone its quantity has been determined at 30,000,000 puds of the very best and purest iron ore. These rich iron-ore deposits being in close proximity to the mail road, deserve special attention; but if it is taken into consideration that they are below 100 versts distance from the big Bije coal basin, it can be boldly presupposed that immediately after the construction of a railway, which, as mentioned above, would pass the centre of the Bije coal basin, large iron foundries would be started in the locality. In the same region—namely, in Djaman-Altuin-Emel mountains, in Kopalsk district—iron ore deposits also exist, which can be favourably compared in respect of quality but not in quantity with those of the Kuizuil-Kum mountains. In Professor Mushketoff's opinion they are of little importance, but as they indicate a probable existence in the neighbourhood of richer lodes, and on their favourable situation, they deserve attention. In many places on the shore of lake Issik-Kul, especially at the mouth of the tributary streams, there accumulates periodically a sufficiently thick layer of magnetic iron sand. These layers attain one arshin (28 inches) in thickness, as, for example, near the Kurumdinsky station, and not far from the village Slivkinskaya. The sand contains 72% of pure iron and a small quantity of manganese. This sand has been used by the Kirghiz for years for the manufacture of knives, nails, crowbars, &c. These deposits being inconsiderable, they never will be taken seriously in hand, but as they are contained in a drift sand it is a proof that the neighbouring mountains must contain rich

deposits of magnetic ironstone deserving investigation. North of the city of Suidun in Chinese territory, on the river Sarui-Bulak, are rich deposits of magnetic ironstone, which, according to Professor Mushketoff, measure 4 sajens (28 Russian feet) in thickness, 15 sajens (105 Russian feet) in width, and 5 sajens (35 Russian feet) in depth; as this ironstone gradually expands downwards, it can be anticipated that it forms rich deposits of iron ore. These deposits being in close proximity to the boundary of the province, it is very likely that they could be acquired by Russian miners. In other localities of the Kulja district there are magnetic ironstone deposits on the river Ardrata, iron ore on the river Yukok, and in the Bash-Tau mountains; but as all these deposits are small and at a distance they do not deserve any attention. In the province of Semirechensk itself brown ironstone deposits are found in the Pishpek district close to Sarui-Bulak, and in the neighbourhood of Maiguitui; the ironstone of the first place contains 58.3 % of iron, and of the second 22.9 %. These deposits, in respect of their quantity, have not been examined, but as they are near the projected railway they undoubtedly will attract the attention of miners.

Manganese.—In the province of Semirechensk manganese deposits have not been found up to the present. Professor Mushketoff has only discovered such in two places in the Kulja district: on the river Suashu, and near Kapshagai; only that of the latter place deserves attention.

Copper.—The province of Semirechensk is especially rich in copper and silver-lead ores, which are closely connected with each other; here only some copper ores are free of an admixture of lead, but there is not a single leaden ore which does not contain copper. In the district of Pishpek the following localities contain copper ore: on the shores of the river Ulakhol, in the Baum defile, and in the Char-Karitma defile. These deposits are acknowledged to be unimportant. On the rivers Djei-su and Muic-su (copper-river), in the Tékes basin, are copper-ore deposits in the form of copper glance, copper verditer, blue and copper pyrites. These deposits, in respect of quantity, in Professor Mushketoff's opinion, deserve attention. In the district of Sergiopol, in the "Abket" locality, on the southern declivity of the Tarbagatai mountains, are ores giving from 20 to 30 and up to 47 % of copper. On the river Borlo, in the Kulja district, on one of the left tributaries of the river Baratol, are copper-ore deposits which, according to Professor Mushketoff, are worthy of investigation; but they are in Chinese territory, and at some distance from the boundary of the province of Semirechensk.

Lead, Silver.—Silver ore does not exist in the region, but its lead deposits contain silver. Although the quantity of silver found in the lead does not exceed 0.02–0.04 %, it could, nevertheless, be the subject of exploitation together with the lead. Silver-lead deposits are known in the following localities of the province: (1) On the river Ushur, in the valley of the river Djumgala. These deposits are spread over a small area, and for that reason cannot serve for practical purposes. But in the same locality, on the river Djumgala, below the mouth of the river Ushur, are very large deposits of silver-lead glance. According to samples and description by the local inhabitant, Professor Mushketoff considers them enormous and worthy the attention of miners.

(2) In the neighbourhood of Kurdaisky station, Vierny district, the ores are unimportant.

(3) In the Altuin-Emel mountains, two versts south from the mail road, leading from Djarkent to the city of Vierny, are mixed ores—half copper, half silver-lead.

(4) In the Kalkansky mountains, district Kopal, on the right shore of the Ili, are deposits which form a quartzy vein, full of grain, or cubic crystals of lead-glance, lead-ochre, copper-green, blue and pyrites. These deposits are situated in a convenient place for working.

5. In the Kulja district silver-lead deposits exist in the following localities: (1) In the Tarleaguchi defile; (2) Karatal mountains; (3) Sarui-Bulak defile, 30 versts north from the city of Suidun; (4) Chebandinsaisky mountains; and (5) in the valley of the Kuiznil-Bulak, on the southern declivity of the Kanjiga mountains. From the above mentioned Kulja silver-lead deposits, only the last mentioned is of any importance. Professor Mushketoff discovered there four veins, one of which is 1½ archins (42 inches) in thickness, which has been worked already by the Chinese to a depth of four sajens (28 Russian feet). It apparently reaches a depth of 200 sajens (1400 Russian feet). The other vein is 1 archin (28 inches) in thickness. This last deposit, although situated in Chinese territory, is of great importance for the future mining industry in consequence of its richness and convenience of working.

Gold.—Although rumours of rich discoveries of gold in the province of Semirechensk have been current at various times, it has not been confirmed by the results obtained from various mining experiences. The province of Semirechensk is not known to contain any gold deposits. This metal is found in gold-bearing sands of some large rivers and their tributaries. For example, in the basin of the Ili gold is found on its

right tributaries, the Khoros, Bow-Khudzir, Usek, and others; in the basin of lake Issik-Kul, and the river Tékes. Traces of gold were also discovered in the valleys of the rivers Aksu, Northern Aksu, Djukka, and others. On the northern side of the Dzungarian Alatau gold is known to exist, and has been mined on the rivers Tentek, Argaitui, Baksan and Lepsa. The amount of gold, however, is so small that it does not pay the expenses of working. In 1894, gold was obtained from only two gold-mining centres in the Djarkent district, namely, in the Ivanovsky on the river Ketmenka, and Gavrilovsky on the river Bayankol. In the first-named, out of the washing of 731,000 cubic sajens of sand, 7 funts (1 funt = 9028 lb. average), 63 zolotniks (1 zolotnik = 96th part of a funt) and 54 doli (1 doli = 96th part of a zolotnik) of gold was obtained. In the latter out of 207,400 square sajens of sand were obtained 1 funt, 51 zolotniks, 45 doli. In 1895 mining was carried on only in the Ivanovsky centre, where out of 814,000 cubic sajens of sand only 7 funts, 49 zolotniks, 84 doli of gold was obtained. In 1896, in the Ivanovsky centre, the results of a more careful method of mining, were 8 funts, 6 zolotniks, 6 doli.

It is evident that these figures are too unimportant for the encouragement of a gold-mining industry; however, on a more careful survey, virgin gold may be discovered in the mountains where the gold-bearing rivers have their origin, which would then change the existing state of affairs. From this short review of the mineral resources of the country it can be seen that the province of Semirechensk is very rich in copper, iron and lead. It is also shown that the majority of these ores are near the coal-bearing districts, so that the country possesses everything for a successful future mining industry. In this respect the Altuin-Emelsky and Koturkaisky mountains, province Kopalsk, deserve special attention, where large iron and lead foundries could flourish. The absence of a railway, however, makes it impossible for the province of Semirechinsk to compete with other markets, owing to the inconvenient and expensive means of transport. In that case there would only remain the local demand, which, however, is not sufficiently important to justify the making of roads, the working of coal mines, and the construction of works. Therefore, although the province of Semirechensk is rich in coal and other minerals, this wealth is destined to remain untouched until the province has better means of communication with other parts of the empire and countries adjoining. Besides the minerals described above, the province abounds with others which would form important articles of commerce. Among these may be mentioned :—

Graphite.—Rich deposits of graphite are known in the neighbourhood of Sergiopol and in the district of Pishpek, in the Sarui-Bulak locality, on the road leading to Narin. Unfortunately, although the graphite is said to be of the purest quality, its quantity is not ascertained. In the Kulja district, ten versts east from the lake Sairam-Nor, in the Kuyuki mountains, are also graphite deposits. According to Professor Mushketoff's researches, the slate of this locality contains three seams of graphite, on an average 2 archins (56 inches) in thickness, capable of yielding 70,000,000 puds of pure graphite. The same authority states that the Sergiopol deposits are much larger.

Salt.—Rock salt exists in the following localities of the province:—In the valley of the river Kochkara it is spread over an area of about 100 square versts, where the stocks of salt are at times 15 sajens (105 Russian feet) in width, 10 (70 Russian feet) in length, and 4 (28 Russian feet) in thickness. Here the Kirghiz obtain salt for their own use, and also as an article of barter for bread in Russian villages in Pishpek and Prjevalsky districts. On the river Nauruz, close to the station Issik-ata, the deposits of rock salt are greater than in the preceding locality. In the Djumalsky bailiwick, not far from the station Kumbel-ata, and along the valley of the Naruin, on the river Alabuga, there are entire mountains of salt. Rich deposits of salt are in the valley of lake Issik-Kul, and also in the valley of the river Karkara; but, unfortunately, these localities have not been examined. Lake salt is obtained by the Kirghizes from the lakes Balkash, Borogobosun, and in the localities Karagenya and Roya.

Gypsum.—This mineral always accompanies rock-salt deposits, and forms a slope up to 100 sajens and more; for example, on the river Naruin. In Buam defile, in the Boroldai mountains, close to the city of Vernoye, and on the river Ili, it forms rich deposits, reaching a few score of sajens in thickness. The city of Vierny obtains excellent gypsum, clear as crystal, for building purposes, from the Djarkent district.

Virgin Brimstone, Sal Ammoniac, Green Vitriol and Alum.—These products only occur locally in the form of paste and flowers on other rocks. Brimstone and sal ammoniac appear in localities subject to coal mine fires, on the river Chapchal, in the Kulja district. The quantity of brimstone and sal ammoniac being very small, it will hardly form an article of commerce. Although of little commercial value on the bazaars of Vierny, it proves that the natives, in all likelihood, know the existence of more important deposits, requiring the attention

of future investigators. According to Semirechensk data for 1894, 4000 puds of sal ammoniac were obtained in the district of Djarkent, and sent to Tashkent. These deposits are located on the right shore of the Ili, close to the Dubunsky crossing.

Glauber Salt deposits exist on the shore of the lake Balkash, where they are 1 archin (28 inches) and more in thickness, and extend about 1½ vers. This salt, on investigation, is found to be a pure, waterless sulphatic natron, and on the existence of a railway could form an important article of trade and commerce. According to local rumours, glauber salt is also found in the mountains south of the Lynbovnaya station.

Asbestos deposits exist on the road leading to Naruin, close to Kumbel-ata station. Its quality is not ascertained, but the deposits are worth investigation.

Elaterite.—This resinous substance is to be found on the shore of lake Ala-kul, close to the southern extremity of lake Balkash, and forms a soft, extensible mass of dark brown colour. Its quantity is not ascertained, but there is no doubt that this elastic mountain resin is worthy the attention of future researches and miners.

Osokerite.—This mineral is found in the Buam and Naruin defiles. It appears in places on the surface of the earth, and is very pure and transparent. It is called locally "parafina." Its quantity is not ascertained, but it is undoubtedly considerable.

Marble.—So far only one deposit of good marble is known in the province of Semirechensk, namely, in the valley of the Kaskelen, near the city of Vierny. These deposits are very rich, and the lower layers of the marble are of good quality.

Lime.—This building material is prepared and sold all over the province.

From this short review it is evident that the mineral wealth of the province of Semirechensk is sufficient, diverse, and considerable to serve as articles of an extensive trade and commerce.

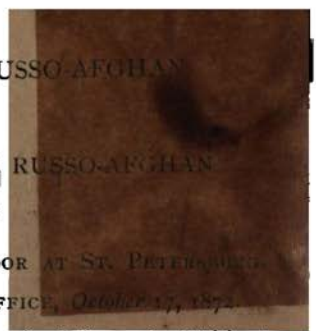
It can also be justly said that this wealth is insufficiently known and explored, and therefore there is ground for supposing that, on a more careful exploration, which is bound to follow the erection of metallurgic smelteries, other minerals would be discovered, and the power of yielding of those already known more precisely determined. From time to time rumours are spread of the discovery of some mineral, but these are taken no notice of, as it is well known that, owing to the want of proper means of communication and expensive means of transport, a profitable exploitation of the natural wealth of the country

is at present impossible. For example, very rich deposits of red and yellow ochre are known in various localities of the province, which are so pure that the local painters use it without any preliminary preparations. The Kirghiz, who procure it in great quantities, sell it for a mere song, or exchange it for bread in the nearest towns or villages. It is also rumoured that in the valley of the Naruin are rich deposits of cinnabar (vermilion). These rumours, however, may be exaggerated; nevertheless, they deserve special attention, and there is ground for anticipating that, on a better means of transport of goods into other provinces and Russia, mineral works in the valleys of the Naruin and Kachkara would arise for the working of cinnabar (vermilion) and other products. Another reason for the complete stagnation of the mining industry of the province is the want of capitalists, but this in its turn arises from the absence of a railway and navigable rivers. There is no doubt that, although provisions and labour are cheap, no capitalist under existing circumstances would think of working the mineral resources of the country.

APPENDIX D

TREATIES RESPECTING THE RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER

CORRESPONDENCE SETTLING THE RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER OF 1872



EARL GRANVILLE TO LORD LOFTUS, AMBASSADOR AT ST. PETERSBURG.

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 17, 1872.

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT have not yet received from the Cabinet of St. Petersburg communication of the report which General Kaufmann was long since instructed to draw up on the countries south of the Oxus which are claimed by the ruler of Afghanistan as his hereditary possessions. Her Majesty's Government have awaited this communication in full confidence that impartial inquiries instituted by that distinguished officer would confirm the views they themselves take of this matter, and so enable the two Governments to come to a prompt and definitive decision on the question that has been so long in discussion between them. But as the expected communication has not reached them, and as they consider it of importance, both for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in Central Asia and for removing all causes of misunderstanding between the Imperial Government and themselves, I will no longer delay making known through your Excellency to the Imperial Government the conclusion at which her Majesty's Government have arrived after carefully weighing all the evidence before them. In the opinion, then, of her Majesty's Government the right of the Ameer of Kabul (Sher Ali) to the possession of the territories up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh is fully established, and they believe, and have so stated to him through the Indian Government, that he would have a right to defend these territories if invaded. On

the other hand, her Majesty's authorities in India have declared their determination to remonstrate strongly with the Ameer should he evince any disposition to overstep these limits of his kingdom. Hitherto the Ameer has proved most amenable to the advice offered to him by the Indian Government, and has cordially accepted the peaceful policy which they have recommended him to adopt, because the Indian Government have been able to accompany their advice with an assurance that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan would in like manner be respected by those Powers beyond his frontiers which are amenable to the influence of Russia. The policy thus happily inaugurated has produced the most beneficial results in the establishment of peace in the countries where it has long been unknown. Her Majesty's Government believe that it is now in the power of the Russian Government, by an explicit recognition of the right of the Ameer of Kabul to these territories which he now claims, which Bokhara herself admits to be his, and which all evidence as yet produced shows to be in his actual and effectual possession, to assist the British Government in perpetuating, so far as it is in human power to do so, the peace and prosperity of those regions, and in removing for ever by such means all cause of uneasiness and jealousy between England and Russia in regard to their respective policies in Asia.

For your Excellency's more complete information I state the territories and boundaries which her Majesty's Government consider as fully belonging to the Ameer of Kabul—viz.:—

(1) Badakshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sarikal (Wood's Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha river with the Oxus (or Penjah), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire extent.

(2) Afghan Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha river to the post of the Khoja Saleh, inclusive, on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Ameer on the left bank of the Oxus below Khoja Saleh.

(3) The internal districts of Aksha, Seripool, Maimenant, Shibherfan and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.

(4) The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorassan is well known and need

not here be defined. Your Excellency will give a copy of this despatch to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.,

GRANVILLE.

[REPLY.]

PRINCE GORTCHAKOFF TO COUNT BRUNNOW (*communicated to Earl Granville by Count Brunnow, February* 5, 1873).

ST. PETERSBURG, *January* 31, 1873.

M. LE COMTE,—Lord Augustus Loftus has communicated to me the reply of her Britannic Majesty's principal Secretary of State to our despatch on Central Asia of the 19th December.

I enclose a copy of his document.

We see with satisfaction that the English Cabinet continues to pursue in those parts the same object as ourselves, that of ensuring to them peace, and as far as possible, tranquillity. The divergence which existed in our views was with regard to the frontiers assigned to the dominions of Sher Ali. The English Cabinet includes within them Badakshan and Wakhan, which, according to our views, enjoyed a certain independence. Considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts, considering the greater facilities which the British Government possesses for collecting precise data, and, above all, considering our wish not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it, we do not refuse to accept the line of boundary laid down by England. We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all her influence with Sher Ali in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude, as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression or further conquests. This influence is indisputable. It is based not only on the material and moral ascendency of England, but also on the subsidies for which Sher Ali is indebted to her. Such being the case, we see in his assurance a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace. Your Excellency will have the goodness to make this declaration to her Britannic Majesty's principal Secretary of State, and to give him a copy of this despatch. We are convinced that Lord Granville will perceive in it a fresh proof of the value which our august master attaches to the maintenance and consolidation of the most friendly relations with the Government of her Majesty Queen Victoria.

[*Signed*] GORTCHAKOF.

RUSSO-AFGHAN BOUNDARY CONVENTION

AGREED AT ST. PETERSBURG, *July* 10, 1887.

1. The frontier, the description of which is contained in the annex to the present Protocol, and which is included between the pillars No. 1 and No. 19, and the pillars No. 36 and No. 65, is considered as definitely settled. The trigonometrical points on the portion of the frontier line described above, and included between pillars No. 19 and No. 36, are likewise admitted as definitive. The description of this part of the frontier, as well as that of the part to the eastward of pillar No. 65, may be completed after the demarcation. The synopsis of pillars attached to Protocol No. 15, dated the 1st (13th) September, 1886, is admitted to be correct and definitive as regards pillars No. 1 to No. 19 and No. 36 to No. 65. It will be completed subsequently by the synopsis of the pillars from No. 20 to No. 35, and by that of the pillars to the east of No. 65.

2. Leaving pillar No. 19 the frontier shall follow a straight line up to the summit of the hill marked 2740 on map No. 1 annexed to the present Protocol. This point, where pillar No. 20 shall be placed, is known under the denomination of trigonometrical station of Kara Tepe (latitude 35° 17′ 49″, longitude 62° 15′ 17″). Farther on the line shall descend the crest of the hills, being directed from this point towards the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur. Pillar No. 21 shall be placed on a point of this crest or of its slope, so as to be seen from the confluence above mentioned. A straight line shall connect No. 21 with No. 22, placed in the valley of the Kushk on the left bank of the river, 900 feet to the north of the confluence of the Kushk with the Moghur. Leaving pillar No. 22, the line shall ascend the thalweg of the Kushk to pillar No. 23, placed 2700 feet above the head of the new canal, on the right bank of which the water supply is situated about 6000 feet to the N.N.E. of the Tiaret of Chahil-Dukhter. From pillar No. 23 a straight line shall be traced to the point marked 2925 on map No. 3 annexed to the present Protocol (latitude 35° 16′ 53″, longitude 62° 27′ 57″). Whence the frontier shall follow the line of the water-parting, passing through the following points:—The point 3017 (Bandi Akhamar, latitude 35° 14′ 21″, longitude 62° 35′ 48″, pillar No. 26); the point 3198 (latitude 35° 14′ 20″, longitude 62 41′ 0″, pillar No. 27); and the point Kalari 2 (latitude 35° 18′ 21″, longitude 62° 47′ 18″); and shall run on to the point marked No. 29 on map No. 4 annexed to

the present Protocol. The frontier shall cross the valley of the river Kashan in a straight line between pillars No. 29 and No. 30 (trigonometrical station of Tori-Scheikh, latitude 35° 24′ 51″, longitude 62° 59′ 43″, map No. 3), where it meets the line of the water-parting of the Kashan and the Murghab, shall pass on to this latter, and shall follow it up to the trigonometrical station of the Kashan (latitude 35° 38′ 13″, longitude 63° 6′ 4″, pillar No. 32). From this station a straight line shall be traced to a point on the Murghab (pillar No. 35) situated 700 feet above the canal-head of the canal Yaki-Yuz or Yaki-Yangi. Further on the frontier, descending the thalweg of the Murghab, shall join pillar No. 36 of the frontier demarcated in 1885-86. To the east of pillar No. 65 the frontier shall follow the line marked A B C D on map No. 8 annexed to the present Protocol, the point A being situated at a distance of 3500 feet south of the walls of Tinam Nazar; the point B being near Kara-Tépé-Khurd-Kak, which remains to the Afghans; the point C about midway between the east and west walls of Katabadji; and lastly, the point D about midway between the wells Ali Kadim and the wells marked Chahi. The wells of Tinam Nazar, Kara-Tépé-Khurd, West Katabadji and Ali Kadim remain outside of Afghan territory. From the point D a straight line shall be traced as far as the commencement of the local frontier demarcated between Bosagha and Khamiab, which shall continue to serve as frontier between the two villages, with the single reservation that the canals of Bosagha along all their course, that is to say, as far as Koïnli (point H), shall be included in Russian territory. In other words, the present demarcation will confirm the existing rights of the two parties on the banks of the Amu Daria, that is to say, that the inhabitants of Khamiah shall retain all their lands and all their pastures, including those which are east of the local frontier marked E F G on maps Nos. 9 and 10 annexed to the Protocol. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Bosagha shall retain the exclusive enjoyment of their canals as far as Koïnli, with the right of repairing and supplying them, in accordance with the customs in force in regard to those of Khamiab, when the waters of Amu Daria are too low to supply directly the canal heads of Koïnli. The officers who shall be charged to execute on the spot the provisions of the present Protocol between the above-named pillars shall be bound to place a sufficient number of intermediate pillars, taking advantage for this purpose as much as possible of the salient points.

3. The clause in Protocol No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December, 1885, prohibiting the Afghans from making use of the irrigating canals in the

Kushk valley below Chahil Duphter, which were not in use at that time, remains in force; but it is understood that this clause can only be applied to the canals supplied by the Kushk. The Afghans shall not have the right to make use of the waters of the Kushk for their agricultural works north of Chahil Dukhter; but the waters of the Moghur belong exclusively to them, and they may carry out any works they may think necessary in order to make use of them.

4. The clauses in Protocols No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December, 1885, and No. 15 of the 1st (13th) September, 1886, relative to the construction of a dam on the Murghab, remain in force. M. Linoview having expressed the wish that the obligation imposed on the Ameer of Afghanistan to give up for this purpose a tract of land on the right bank of the Murghab, under the conditions stipulated in the said Protocols, should be extended to the whole course of the river below the canal-head of Yaki-Yuz. Colonel Ridgeway is of opinion that the necessary steps to obtain the assent of the Ameer might delay the conclusion of the present arrangement; but he is nevertheless convinced that the assent of the Ameer to this cession, under the same conditions, of a tract of land on the right bank can be obtained without difficulty, if later on the Imperial Government should inform her Britannic Majesty's Government of their intention of proceeding to the construction of a dam above the canal-head of Bendi Nadiri.

5. The British Government will communicate without delay to the Ameer of Afghanistan the arrangements herein agreed upon, and the Imperial Government of Russia will enter into possession of the territory adjudged to them by the present Protocol from the 1st (13th) October of the present year.

6. The frontier agreed upon shall be locally demarcated by a mixed Commission according to the signed maps. In case the work of demarcation should be delayed, the line traced on the maps shall nevertheless be considered binding by the two Governments.

[The frontier was duly demarcated and agreed to in sections, the Protocol for each section being signed separately, and at a different date. For purposes of easy reference, the entire frontier between the Hari Rud and the Oxus is here given in the order of its geographical position.]

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA WITH REGARD TO THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE REGION OF THE PAMIRS

DATED *March* 11, 1895.

1. THE spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia to the east of Lake Victoria (Zor Koul) shall be divided by a line which, starting from a point on that lake near to its eastern extremity, shall follow the crests of the mountain range running somewhat to the south of the latitude of the lake as far as the Bendersky and Orta-Bel Passes.

From thence the line shall run along the same range while it remains to the south of the latitude of the said lake. On reaching that latitude it shall descend a spur of the range towards Kizil Rabat on the Aksu river, if that locality is found not to be north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, and from thence it shall be prolonged in an easterly direction so as to meet the Chinese frontier.

If it should be found that Kizil Rabat is situated to the north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, the line of demarcation shall be drawn to the nearest convenient point on the Aksu River south of that latitude, and from thence prolonged as aforesaid.

2. The line shall be marked out, and its precise configuration shall be settled by a Joint Commission of a purely technical character, with a military escort not exceeding that which is strictly necessary for its proper protection.

The Commission shall be composed of British and Russian delegates, with the necessary technical assistance.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government will arrange with the Ameer of Afghanistan as to the manner in which his Highness shall be represented on the Commission.

3. The Commission shall also be charged to report any facts which can be ascertained on the spot bearing on the situation of the Chinese frontier, with a view to enable the two Governments to come to an agreement with the Chinese Government as to the limits of Chinese territory in the vicinity of the line, in such manner as may be found most convenient.

4. Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of his Majesty the Emperor of Russia engage to abstain from exercising any

INDEX

ABBOTABAD, 299
Abdul Beg at Kala-i-Wamar, 190
  Ghazi Khan, 265
Abdurrahman Khan, Ameer of Afghanistan, 64, 264
  supplies guns to Afridi, 280
Abdurrahman the Nogai merchant, 133
Abdurrheem Khan, 191, 264
Addgerch, 177
Afghan bearing, 202
  boundary, 257
  Turkistan, 274, 311
Afghans, the, 63
Afridi rifles, how they were obtained, 281
Ag Sipel, 74
Ak Baital, 153–260
Akballa Khan, 92
Akoi, Kirghiz, 35
Aksi, 142
Aktapa, 278
Ak Tash, Chinese fort at, 33, 41
  Russian fort at, 262
  Volast, 260
Ala Tau mountains, 105
  Valley, 152
Alcock, Surgeon, Captain A. W., 258
Aleshkoff, 119
Alichur Pamir, 33
  Volast, 260
Alikhanoff, General, 276
A march for freedom, 209
Ancient MS. from Takla Makhan desert, 72
Andijan, 293
Andkhui, 309
Anglo-Russian Pamirs Agreement, 344
Antiquities from Takla Makhan desert, 72
Apak Pass, 154
A prisoner on parole, 188
Argoons, 129
Artillery practice at Kashgar, 63
Artish, 88
Asi Nullah, 115
Asiatic supremacy of Russia, 253
Assurances, value of Russian, 306
Astor, 11, 234
  River, 11
Ata-Abad, 21, 229

BACK to Kashmir, 225
Badakshan, 257
  agreement as to, 266
  conquered by Abdurrahman, 264
Balkash Lake, 129
Balkh, 274, 309
Baltit, 19
Bamian, 274
Bandipur, 6
Bardera Nullah, 172
Barghoo, 180
Baroghil Pass, 269
Bar Panj, 198
  my visit to, 201
Bartang Defile, the, 168
  River, 171
    cantilever bridge over the, 176
Baseed, 173
"Batchas," 188
Batur Glacier, the, 22, 228
Baum Defile, 141
Bayik Nullah, 40
  Pass, 43, 259
Beaconsfield, Lord, 300
Belaytuk, 156
Benderski, Mons., 258
Berdish Pass, 215, 259
Berlin, Treaty of, 305
Bhora Kuttai, 148
Bhourtsa, 36
Bibliography of Innermost Asia, 346
Block-prints from Takla Makhan desert, 72
Bokhariot feeling towards Russia, 262

Borazan, 74
Borodichen, the Cossack, 120
Boulungkul, 148
Bozai Gumbaz, 217
Bribes to Russian officials, 97
British military roads, 6
  method of dealing with Asiatics criticised by Petrovski, 67
  policy in Asia, 305
  red tape on Gilgit road, 292
Bunji, 11, 234
Burgil Pass, 10, 234
Burkun, 129
Burulik stream, 215

CANTILEVER bridge over the Bartang, 175
Capra falconeri, 10
Celestial Range. *See* Thian Shan
Cervus Canadensis Asiaticus, 98
Chadir Kul, 91, 142, 259
Chadud, 172
Chagarakul, 149
Chakmak, 89
  Lake, 33
Chalt fort, 15
Chang Darin, Mandarin at Kashgar, 60, 148
Charog, 199, 261
  description of, 261
Chikor, 11
Chilas, 12, 234
Chilik, 114
  Nullah, 115
Chillum, 19
Chinese artillery practice, 63
  custom-house at Kashgar, 86
  frontier, the, 258
  misrule in Kashgaria, 286
  Russian estimate of the, 69
  State funeral, a, 145
Chitral, 263
Christmas Day in Kashgar, 75
Chronology of Landmarks respecting Innermost Asia, 319
Churwan, 9
Coal, 330
Commerce of Innermost Asia, 321
Conventions, Pamirs, 261
  Russo-Afghan boundary, 257
Conversation with Russian officers, 200
  Petrovski, 67
Corruption in Russian service, 270
Cossack escort at Kashgar, 66
  display at Kashgar, 71
  marksmanship, 124
Cossacks, qualities of, 210
Cotton, 294
Cumberland, Major C. S., 230
Curzon, Lord, *cited*, 32, 230
Custom-house amenities, 97

DARBAND, 198
Darwaz, 258, 261
Deasy, Captain, 5, 50
Dengeel Tepe, massacre at, 278
Denghiz. *See* Balkash
De Rhins, Dutreuil, murdered, 24
Detained at Ata-abad, 229
De Ujfaly, 163
Dimitrioff, the Cossack settler, 141
Dolun Pass, 100
Dorah Pass, 268
Downfall of Russia, the, 311
Doyan, 11, 234
Dust storms in Kashgar, 146

EDUCATION in Russia, 312
Elias, Ney, 158, 268
  report, 279

F
  nnexation of, by Russia, 256
  Mohammedan rising in, 195, 213, 269
Fever, attack of, 12
Flight of Afghans into Bokhara, 267
Flogging a prefect, 130
Forsyth, Sir T. D., his mission to Yarkand, 303
Forts Charog, 261
  Kala-i-Wamar, 182
  Kala Panja, 262
  Marghabi, 261
Frontier policy of Indian Government, 231
Frontiers, Russo-Afghan, 257
  Russo-Chinese, 258
Fruit in Semiriche, 112
Funeral, a Chinese State, 145
Future of Innermost Asia, 285

GALKINE, Colonel, 258
Gandamak, Treaty of, 305
Gerard, Major-General M. G., 258
Gez Defile, 51, 148
Gholam Hyder, Ressiddar of Bar Panj, 200, 209
Ghund Daria, 181
Gilgit, 12, 233
  road, the, 6
    vexatious delays on, 230
Gircha, 24
Goitre prevalent in the Astor Valley, 10

Gordon, Col. T. E., *cited*, 32
Gourdet, M., 109
Granville-Gortchakoff agreement, 257
Great Britain, the greatest Mohammedan country, 203
Great Kara Kul, 141, 153
Pamir, 33
Grombchevski, Colonel, 257
Gulchas, the, 163
Gulmit, 22, 228
Gurais, 9, 234

HARAMOOK, Mount, 8
Haramosh, 234
Hassein and Hussein, tomb of, 169
Hazrat Afek at Kashgar, 59
story of, 70
Hazrat Ali, fable of, 169
Hedin, Dr. Sven, *cited*, 32
Hendriks, Father, 70, 144, 229
Herat, 274, 309
Hindu Kush, 27, 308
crest of the, 27
the future Russian frontier, 301
Hissar, 309
Hochberg, Swedish missionary, 70
Hoernle, Dr. Rudolf, *cited*, 72
Holdich, Colonel Sir Thomas, 32, 258
Hunza, 229
Mir of, on Russian aims, 307
River, 14, 17

IGNORANCE of political officers, 230
Ili River, 130
Ilinsk, 120
Illiterates in Russia, 312
Imam Hassein and Imam Hussein, tomb of, 59
Indian trade with Innermost Asia, 294
Indoof Jehr, 171
Insurrection in Ferghana, 195, 213, 270
Insolence of Chinese officials, 255
Irshad Pass, 24
Irtish River, 293
Ishkashim, 262
Ishun Kul Beg, Mir of Kala-i-Wamar, 204
his opinion of Russians, 262
Iskander Khan, Rajah of Nagar, 17
Islam Achun of Khotan, 74
Issik Kul, 141, 259
Ivanoff, General, Governor of Semirechia, 111

JAXARTES River, 313
Jhelum River, 6
Jilarik, 102, 141

KABUL, 304
Kala Bar Panja, 262
Kala-i-Wamar, 182
detained at, 189
Kala Khum, 262, 275, 309
Panja, 262
Kandahar, 304
Kara Art Pass, 210, 259
Stream, 152
Karabulak, 103
Kara-Kirghiz, 129
Karakorum Pass, 259
Kara Kul, Great, 141, 153
Kul, Volast, 260
Kum desert, 314
Kurgan, 158
Kara-teke range, 259
Kashagil River, 215
Kashgar, 52, 56
artillery practice at, 63
Chinese garrison at, 62
Maharajah receives tribute from Mir of Hunza, 307
my return to, 143
trade routes to, 297
Katek, Zewar Shah, King of, 74
Kaufmann, General, 276
Peak, 152
"Kazaks," 129
Ke-Akbashi, 151
Keltebuk, 93
Kerki, 309
Kevekiss, Nechelvnik at Charog, 194
his instructions to occupy Chitral, 268
Khaibar, 228
Khargosh Pamir, 33
Kharkash Beg, 220
Khiva, 276, 304, 310
massacre at, 278
Khoja Khan, 135
Khokand, capture of, 256
Khorabad, 227
Khurjin Ok Bar Pass, 168
Khushk, 305, 309
Kila Wanj, 262
Kilif, 309
Kilik Pass, 26
view from, 32
Kirghiz, 26, 89
estimate of English, 39
mode of life, 48
Kishengunga River, 9
Kizil Agin, 152
Art Pass, 153, 260

Kizil Jik Pass, 259
Kul, 153
Kurgan, 90
Rahat, 12
Russian port at, 262
Kizil-su River, 215
Koh-i-Baba, 274
Kohistan, 10, 275
Kokcha River, 257
Kokejeedar, 133
Kokjar Nullah, 154
Kokui Bel, 152, 154
Kolpootch, 214
Komaroff, General, 278
Komri Valley, 234
Kontemis River, 149
Kosh Bel Pass, 152
Krausse, Alexis, *cited*, 273, 312
Kudara River, 263
Kuhdarah, Volast, 260
Kukturuk Nullah, 26, 37
Kulja, 276
Kum Bel, 152
Kumbil-Arta, 101
Kunduz, 274, 309
Kungerab Pass, 24, 49
Kunjut, 259
houses in, 25
Kuropatkin, General, 112, 278
Kushk, 275
Kutemaldi, 101, 141
Kwaja Salar, 275, 278
Kymak, 38

Lake Balkash, 129
Boulungkul, 148
Chadir Kul, 91
Chagirikul, 149
Chakmak, 33
Issik Kul, 141, 259
Kara Kul, 141, 153
Rang Kul, 215, 260, 261
Sirikul, 33, 258
Victoria, 33, 258
Wood's, 33, 258
Wular, 236
Yeshil Kul, 33
Landmarks in the history of Innermost Asia, 319
Langar Kisht, 262
Lanzar at Kashgar, 62
Leh, 297
Lhassa, 303
Little Bokhara, 286
Pamir, 33
Lob Jangal, 25
Loess, 57
Lomakin, General, 276

Macartney, George, British Agent at Kashgar, 52
his position compared with the Russian Consul, 254, 288
Mahomed Hassein, the Taranchi, 139
Maimana, 309
Maltabar, Mount, 259
Nazim Khan, Mir of Hunza, 229
Tukta, the Shikari, 9
Malleson, Colonel, *cited*, 310
Marchenai Pass, 160
Marco Polo, *cited*, 292
Marghilan, 153, 260, 307
Mariom Pamir, 33
Markhun Su Defile, 152
"Marram," duties of a, 197
Marvin, Charles, *cited*, 273
Massacre at Dengeel Tepe, 278
Khiva, 278
McDonald, the brothers, 10
McMahon, Captain, 9, 12
Mecca, pilgrimage to, 289
Merv, 275, 309
Military discipline in Kashgaria, 63
roads in Pamirs, 260
Mineral wealth of Innermost Asia, 328
Mintaka Pass, 38, 220
Mir Ishun Kul, Beg of Kala-i-Wamar, 182, 261
Mirza Bai, 25, 37
Misgah, 24, 217, 226
Mistakes made as to travellers' outfit, 4
Mitchell, Mr. Willie, 10
Mohammedan Powers in Asia, 303
rising in Ferghana, 195
Moja, 150, 214
the truculent Beg of, 150
Mook, Chinese outpost at, 152
Morning prayers at Kala-i-Wamar, 192
Moscow, 593
Mountains: Ala Tau, 105
Hindu Kush, 27, 309
Kara-teke, 259
Koh-i-Baba, 274
Maltabar, 259
Mustagh, 259
Nanga Parbat, 8, 12, 27
Rakapushi, 16
Tian Shan, 76, 88
Trans Alai, 152
Munshi, Sher Mahomed, the, 50, 215
Murghab River, 158
Murghabi fort, formerly Pamirski post, 153, 256, 260
description of, 261
Volast, 260

Murkush, 226
Murrain on Little Pamir, 218
Muscovite methods, 273
Mussocks, 168
Mussulman rising in Ferghana, 195, 213, 270
Mustagh Ata, 51, 148
Mountains, 259
Muzart Pass, 259

NAGAR, 19
Nanga Parbat, 8, 11, 27
Naryn, 93, 142
River, 94
Nassure, 167
Nazim Khan, Mir of Baltit, 19, 232
Neza Tash Pass, 259
Nilt fort, 17
Nishni Novgorod, 293
Nomads of the Pamirs, 33
Nomal, 15
Nuksam Pass, 268
Nullahs: Asi, 117
Bardera, 172
Bayik, 40
Chilik, 115
Kokjar, 155
Kukchuruk, 26
Oi-Balgin, 214
Oprang, 49
Rai Shah Vitch Hoof, 179
Rugmede, 180
Tashkole, 155
Yezgelon, 168
Nurla Bai, 38

OBI River, 293
Official ignorance in India, 230
Official pay in Russia, 95
Oi-Balgin Nullah, 214
Oiboolak, 153
On-Archa, 99
Onward march of Russia in Asia, 256
Oorial, 11
Oosow, 180
Openings for enterprise in Central Asia, 118
Oprang Nullah, 49
Pass, 49
Orenburg, 310
Osh, 153, 294
Osunagach, 104
Otar, 140
Outfit, travellers' mistakes made in, 4
Ovis cycloceros, 11
Karelini, 113, 143
Poli, 26, 34
Oxus River, 182
source of the, 219

PAMIR fort. *See* Murghabi
Pamirs Convention, 257
text, 344
Pamirs, the,
Alichur Pamir, 33
boundaries, 257
characteristics of, 31
direct road to the, 14
first glimpse of the, 27
Great Pamir, 33
Khargosh Pamir, 33
Little Pamir, 33
Mariom, 33
Pamir-i-Wakhan, 33
population, 272
Rang-Kul Pamir, 33
Russian claim to the whole of the, 257
Sarez Pamir, 33
Sarikol, 33
sheep, 40
Shimshal, 33
Taghdumhash Pamir, 32
Pamirski post. *See* Murghabi
Panja River, 192, 198
Pashkurgan, 89
Passes: Apak, 155
Baroghil, 269
Bayik, 43, 259
Berdish, 215, 259
Dolun, 100
Dorah, 268
Irshad, 24
Kara Art, 210, 259
Karakorum, 259
Khurgin Ok Bar, 168
Kilik, 26, 32
Kizil Art, 153, 260
Kizil Jak, 259
Kosh Bel, 152
Kungerab, 24, 49
Marchenai, 160
Mintaka, 38, 220
Muzart, 259
Neza Tash, 259
Nuksam, 268
Oprang, 49
Sari Tash, 259
Shikarf, 268
Tashrabat, 92
Therek-dawan, 293
Tragbal, 7, 235
Turgut, 91, 259
Uch bel, 259
Wakh-jir, 219
Yangi-dawan, 156

Pasu, 228
Pavalo-Shveikovski, General, 258
Peace Conference, an estimate of the, 309
Penjdeh, 305
Pero Loman, the guard, 24, 47
Perry, Surgeon-Major, 10
Persian Gulf, 313
Peshawur, exports from, to Badakshan, 268
Peshnev, 198
Petrovski, Russian Consul-General at Kashgar, 66
his criticism on British methods, 67
Pishpek, 141
Polo at Nagar, 19
Port Arthur, 276
Pussore, 157
Pyderood, 179

QUA, Kashgarian pug-dog, 85

RACES of the Upper Oxus, 162
Racing in Sirikol, 50
Rai Shah Vitch Hoof Nullah, 179
Rakapushi, Mount, 16
Rang Kul, 215, 260, 261
Kul Pamir, 33
Kul, Volast, 260
Raskam Daria, 49, 144
Valley, 74
Rawlinson, Sir Henry, *cited*, 273
Razouge, 178
Reclus, Elisée, *cited*, 32
Red Tape on the Indian frontier, 231
Relations between Russia and China, 67
Ressiddar Gholam, Hyder of Bar Panj, 200, 209
Review, a Chinese, 63
Revolt in Ferghana, the, 195, 213, 270
Rhamghat Bridge, 11
Rhins, Dutreuil de, 24
Rifle practice at Kashgar, 63
River Ak-baital, 153, 260
Astor, 11
Bartang, 171
Burulik, 215
Ghund Daria, 182
Hunza, 14, 17
Ili, 129
Indus, 8
Irtish, 293
Jaxartes, 313
Jhelum, 6
Kashagil, 215
Kishenjunga, 9
River Kokcha, 257
Kontemis, 149
Kudara, 263
Murghab, 158
Naryn, 94
Obi, 293
Oxus, 183
Panja, 192, 199
Raskam Daria, 49, 144
Sir Daria, 94
Suchan Daria, 199
Suok, 90
Tekes, 139
Yasin, 14
Zarafshan, 314
Roads in the Pamirs, 260
Roberts', Lord, March to Kandahar, 304
Roshan, 260
transferred to Russia, 261
Roshor, 159
Rugmede Nullah, 180
Russian assurances, worthlessness of, 305
boundaries, 257
customs at Akbashi, 96
dealings with Kirghiz, 39
information, 199
method of treating Chinese, 69
mode of ruling natives, 69
mode of treating her commanders, 68
opinion of Afghan, 201
plans for invading Chitral and Badakshan, 268
policy in Innermost Asia, 307
posts on Pamirs, 261
roads, 260
routes into India, 268
view of British rule, 67
Russians in Central Asia, 64

SACHARB, 198
Sakpas, 24
Samarcand, 310
Samsay, 140
Sarakhs, 309
Sarez Pamir, 33, 260
Sarhad, 299
Sarikol, 259
Pamir, 33
the future of, 307
Sarikolis, 49
Sari-Tash Pass, 259
Sarts, troublesome, 143
Sasik Kul, 33
Sates, 162
Saxoul, 122
Schouvaloff, Count, 276

Seistan, 311
Semipalatinsk, 293
Semiriche, 112
Shah Wanji Khan, 264
Sheep on the Pamirs, 40
See also Ovis Poli.
Sherisabz, 309
Sher Mahomed Munshi, 50, 215
Sheru-Maidan, 26
Shietai, commandant at Kashgar, 60
Shighnan, 260
transferred to Russia, 261
Shikarf Pass, 268
Shimshal Pamir, 33
Pass, 23
Shinaki country, 8
Shur Chor, mimbashi of Roshan, 161, 209
Sir Daria, 94, 310
Sirikul, or Wood's Lake. *See* Victoria Lake
Skin rafts on the Bartang, 173
Somatash, fight at, 257, 278
Source of the Oxus, 219
Sozontoff, M., prefect of Akbashi, 94
Sport at Gilgit, 13
Sportsman's paradise, a, 11
Spy, Russian, in Chitral, 269
system and pay, 269
Srinagar, my start from, 6
return to, 236
Stillness on the Pamirs, 37
Stores taken from Srinagar, 5
Suchan Daria, 199
Sugar, 296
Suok Allaganchik, 90
River, 90
Sur Panj, 179

TAGHARMA Plain, 215
Taghdumbash Pamir, 32, 33, 220, 259
Tajiks, 157, 314
Takla Makhan Desert, 74
Talienwan, 276
Taotai, civil governor of Kashgar, 60
ignorance of, 62
reception by, 61
Tashbulak, 52
Tashk Tash fort, 88
Tashkend, 310
Tashkole Nullah, 155
Tashkurgan (Bartang Defile), 156
(Sarikol) 50
Tashrabat, 92
Tashrabat Pass, 92
Tea, 295
trade with Kashgar, 295
Teetai, military governor of Kashgar, 60
Tekes River, 139
Tekke Turkomans, 314
Therek-dawan Pass, 293
Thian Shan Mountains, 76, 88
stag, 98, 112
Tibet, 303
Tiger, after, 131
Tiger's entrails, curious use of among Chinese, 62
Tilai-Bai, my caravanman, 5
his journey, 217
sent back to Gilgit with news of my detention, 190
Tirah Expedition, the, 67
Tokmak, 141
Trade of Innermost Asia, 321
routes to Kashgar, 297
Tragbal Pass, 7, 235
Trans-Alia Mountains, 152
Treaty of Berlin, 305
Gandamak, 305
Truculent Beg, a, 151
Tsar's birthday, celebration of in Kashgar, 71
Tumen, 293
Turfan, 286
Turgat, 143
Pass, 91, 259
Turgen, 114

UCH BEL Pass, 259
Ujadbai, 48
Unif, General, 172
Ursus Leuconyx, 113
Urta Bel Pass, 259
Urumchi, 148
Usphala Shan, 264
Ust Urt Plateau, 314

VAMBÉRY, Arminius, *cited*, 273
Vexatious regulations as to frontier roads, 292
Victoria Lake, 33, 258
Vierny, 109
my return to, 135

WAHAB, Lt.-Col., R.A., 258
Wakhan, 257, 307
Wakh Jir Pass, 218
Wangi Khan Shah, 264
Wood, Captain John, *cited*, 32
Wood's Lake. *See* Victoria Lake
Wrewsky, Baron, Governor-General of Turkestan, 161
Wular Lake, 236

YAIMS, 181, 265
Yakub Beg, 58, 299
Yangi-dawan Pass, 156
Yarkand, 60
Yasin River, 14
Yeshil Kul, 33
Yezgelon Nullah, 168
Yielding, Major, 7
Yomud massacre, 278
Younghusband, Captain F E., *cited*; 32, 231
Younghusband, Capt. F.E.—*continued*.
his mission to Kashgar, 67
Yonoff, Captain, 256
Yourt Kirghiz, 36
Yupchun, 168

ZALESKI, Colonel, 258
Zarafshan River, 314
Zebak, 268
Zewar Shah, King of Katak, 73

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co,
London & Edinburgh

00065985

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018